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MY LIFE

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MY LIFE

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CALVÉ AS CARMEN

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MY LIFE

BY

EMMA CALVÉ

TRANSLATED BY

ROSAMOND GILDER

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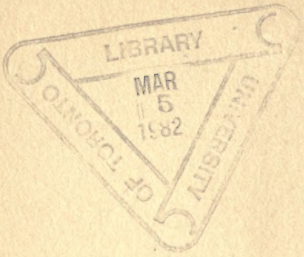

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Sweetness and strength, high tragedy and mirth,
And but one Calvé on the singing earth.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Childhood	1
II.	Years of Study	23
III.	Débuts in Brussels and Paris	31
IV.	Suffering and Sickness	43
V.	Final Preparation	47
VI.	A Tour in Italy	55
VII.	The Holy City	63
VIII.	A Venetian Triumph	69
IX.	Dark Hours	75
X.	"Cavalleria" and "Carmen" in Paris	79
XI.	The Court at Windsor	87
XII.	The Metropolitan Opera House, New York	99
XIII.	En Route through the United States	113
XIV.	A Spanish Audience	125
XV.	The City of Mexico	131
XVI.	A Cuban Interlude	135
XVII.	St. Petersburg	139
XVIII.	A Concert in the Palace of the Sultan of Turkey	147

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XIX.	Cabrières	153
XX.	Two Famous Opera Singers	161
XXI.	Artists and Friends	171
XXII.	A Monk of the Order of the Vedantas	185
XXIII.	Mistral	195
XXIV.	Around the World	201
XXV.	During the Great War	213
XXVI.	A Nest of Young Song Birds	225
XXVII.	A Day at Home	241
XXVIII.	Health and Hygiene	249
XXIX.	Art and Song	255
XXX.	A Happy Return	267
	Index	275

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Calvé as Carmen . . . . . *Frontispiece*
From the Original Painting by Théobald Chartran

Facing Page

Emma Calvé at Five 6
Emma Calvé During Her Student Years in Paris . 28
Emma Calvé in "Le Chevalier Jean" 28
Emma Calvé at Twenty 44
Emma Calvé as Santuzza 44
Eleonora Duse 60
Calvé as Ophelia
From a Statue by Denys Peuch 66
Calvé as Sappho 82
Galli-Marie, Creator of Carmen 82
Massenet's Dedication Written on the Fly-leaf of "Sappho" 86
Queen Victoria at Five 92
Calvé as Carmen 100
Character Portrait of Victor Maurel
From the Painting by Benjamin Constant . 104
Emma Calvé on a Concert Tour in the United States 122
Calvé as Ophelia 140
The Chateau of Cabrières as Seen from the Highway 154
Calvé Singing the "Marseillaise" 214
Calvé as Messaline 234
A Room in the Chateau of Cabrières 242
The Chateau of Cabrières 242

PRELUDE

IT was in France, ah, many years ago!

The Midi sun, in all its blazing ardour, filled the still air with vibrant heat and light. Along a road which led past a chateau, high perched on its rocky hilltop, I was walking with a group of little girls, my companions in the convent where I was being educated. The castle we approached was the only one in the countryside, a proud place, noble and aloof. We thought it very beautiful, and used to gaze in awe and admiration at its towers and turrets silhouetted against the burning sky. On this particular day I seemed to see it with new eyes.

"Who knows?" I said to one of my companions. "Perhaps some day that castle will belong to me!"

My playmates looked at me in astonishment, and then burst into laughter.

"What nonsense!" they exclaimed. "You own the chateau—you! Don't be so silly! It's not even for sale; but, if it were, how could a poor little girl like you buy such a beautiful place?"

I laughed with them at the absurdity of the idea,

and we went on our way, happily irresponsible and unconscious of the future.

Yet, after all, in that moment of prevision, I had not been wrong. That castle was Cabrières where I now live. The dream came true, though the way was long and hard. It led through years of strenuous work, through sorrow and suffering, through difficulty and despair. Sometimes there were stretches of happiness, where the birds sang and joy filled my heart. Sometimes the road led through the dazzling gateway of success, through triumph and achievement, to a goal not yet attained, for, though I own Cabrières and my childhood prophecy has been fulfilled, I find that, once started on the arduous path, there is no resting by the way. Each year brings new interests and possibilities, new striving for an unattainable ideal.

One day it occurred to me to write down a few of the most striking incidents that had taken place along this road, to record one or two of the scenes, sad or gay, humourous or pathetic, that had mottled with lights and shadows the pathway of my life. I have a vivid photographic memory, and I found that my pen could hardly keep pace with the flashing pictures that came into my mind.

Before I realised it, I had written what I have

here. It is not a treatise on art or life, nor has it any pretensions to literary excellence. It is quite simply the story of my artistic career. I give it to the public with something of the perturbation of a young singer making her first appearance before the footlights.

The prelude is over. The curtain rises. But, after all, I am not a newcomer on the scene. I see many familiar faces in the audience, and I can say, before I begin my story:

"Greetings, my friends and comrades!"

MY LIFE

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

I WAS born in the Department of Aveyron in southern France, on a wild and rocky upland of the Cevennes mountains where my forebears had lived for countless generations. The country is rugged, desolate. Its limestone cliffs, its deep valleys and mysterious grottos are filled with a romantic charm. To the south, lordly mountains raise their peaks against the sky, crowned like royal princesses, with flashing diadems of stone.

This part of France is little known to the outside world. Only recently, since the Gorges of the Tarn have been opened to the public, have strangers visited our corner of Aveyron. To me, it has always seemed beautiful. I love its lonely stretches, the strange colours of its rocks, its hills and valleys. It has about it something of the fascination, the melancholy, of the desert, and so I call it "L'Aveyron Pétré," thinking the while of "stony Arabie."

This region was once the haunt of the Ruthenian tribes, whom the Roman legionaries conquered on their way northward through ancient Gaul. The Romans built their roads along the high plateaux, imperishable roads that can be followed to this day. One of my learned friends has told me that Cæsar, in his Commentaries, describes this tribe of Ruthenians as "an indomitable race, living like wolves in their impenetrable forests."

Alas! The forests have disappeared, but we, the people, are still untamed, clinging to our traditions, deeply religious, passionately attached to the soil. As for me, I am unmovable! My roots are in the past, I am part of that earth, those rocky mountains, that burning southern sky. Elsewhere, I am in exile. I must return to that small spot of land, my "little country" on the mountainside, if I am to keep well, if I am to maintain my happiness, my courage and my voice!

For centuries, my forebears lived in the old family house or *oustal,* as it is called, at La Bastide, where I passed the second part of my childhood. They were stern and hardy men, owners of the land, cultivators of the soil. They cared nothing for money, preferring their independence, proud

to pass on their property from father to son.

The plateau of Larzac, where they lived, is one of the loveliest of the Cevennes. It has seen many battles since the days of the Roman legions—the wars of religion, the descents of the English. At one time it was inhabited by the Knights Templars, who took refuge there from the persecutions of Philip le Bel. They built themselves fortified chateaux, and their presence is still a part of the traditions of the countryside. To this day, when a child shows unusual signs of intelligence or character, or is more than ordinarily beautiful, it is said of him:

"He is a true son of the Templars!"

My father, who was the eighth son of the family, broke away from the traditions of his clan and ventured upon new lines of work. He became interested in the railroad then being built in the Rouergue. Later an associate involved him in an enterprise which took him to Spain. My mother followed him, taking me with her. I was then only three months old. One business venture following upon another kept my father there until my seventh year, so that the first language that I spoke was Spanish.

One of the most vivid memories of my childhood centres around an incident that took place during our stay in Spain. It illustrates, more vividly than any amount of description, the courage and energy which were striking characteristics of my mother's nature. She was free and fearless, a woman of strong opinions and of a ready address. While her heart was warm and generous, she was impulsive and wilful, and had no hesitation in carrying into effect what she thought to be right.

At the time of which I am speaking, Spain was in a condition of acute political excitement. Don Carlos, Duke of Madrid, the last of the long line of claimants to the Spanish throne, had entered the country with a considerable army and organised and led a revolt against the existing government. War and rumours of war were all about us in the village where we were living. Carlist and government soldiers and the members of the ever-present *guardia civile* swarmed its streets. Feeling ran high in the Basque provinces, where the inhabitants were unanimous in their support of Don Carlos, who promised them the regional privileges they so much desired. Very naturally, my mother's sympathies went with those of her neighbours. She was

keenly interested in all that went on around her; and even I, young as I was, had absorbed a little of the excitement and enthusiasm of the moment.

One day my mother and I were in our living room. She was occupied with some domestic cares, and I was lying on the big bed, taking my afternoon siesta. This bed was one of those large, old-fashioned affairs, built into a corner of the room, and quite as broad as it was long, so that I had ample room to roll about and amuse myself. I was supposed to be asleep, but actually I was day-dreaming and blinking at the sunlight which filtered through the closed blinds.

Suddenly the door was thrown violently open, and a man staggered into the room and fell in a heap on the floor. I cried out in terror, and my mother leaped to her feet. She seemed to have grasped the situation in a flash, for she rushed to the door instantly and closed and bolted it. Then she turned to the man on the floor. He was wounded, but not unconscious, and in a moment she had helped him to his feet.

"Hide me! Hide me! For the love of God!" he exclaimed, gasping for breath and clutching his

wounded arm. "They're after me, and I can't go another step!"

"Who are you?" my mother asked. "What has happened? I see you are hurt. What have you been doing?"

"Don Carlos!" the man cried. "I am a Carlist! There has been a scrimmage out there." He indicated the road leading to the next village. "The others got away, but I was shot in the arm. I have lost so much blood——" The poor boy, for he was not much more than that, turned to my mother and clutched at her desperately. "Hide me! Hide me! I can't go on!"

While he talked, my mother had been binding up his arm with strips of linen from her work bag, and now she turned to me where I sat, wide-eyed and frightened, on the big bed.

"Get up, *Fantoune!*" she ordered.

I can see her intent face and commanding presence to this day. In the haze that time has drawn over the long-past scene, I can still feel the force of my mother's will as she dominated and controlled the situation.

"Get up, *Fantoune!*" she repeated, sharply, and

Emma Calvé at Five

by the time I had got to my feet she was beside the bed.

Throwing back the covers and feather mattresses, she made a place between the springs and the bedding, where she could hide the fugitive. He crawled in near the wall, lying flat, so that he could breathe and so that the weight of the mattress and covers came on him only lightly. Then the coverings were replaced and the bed smoothed over.

"Now, *mon enfant,*" my mother said, taking me in her arms and looking into my eyes, "you must lie down and go to sleep. Remember, not a sound, not a word from you!"

"Yes. Mamma, yes," I answered in an awed whisper, my whole being straining to meet the demand that I read in my mother's eyes.

"Not a word!" she said again. "You have seen nothing. Do you understand? If any one comes in, you have seen nothing!"

She had hardly put me on the bed in my old position near the outer edge and covered me with a blanket, when we heard steps on the roadway outside. In a flash, my mother was at the door, slipping back the bolt. Then she returned to the work she had dropped a few moments before, and con-

tinued her occupation as though nothing had interrupted her.

She was only just in time. Lying on the bed, my heart gave a dreadful thud as the room reverberated with a cascade of violent knocking. My mother opened the door, and I saw a flash of sunlight on steel bayonets and heard the clashing of the soldiers' accoutrement. I shut my eyes and swallowed hard.

"You must go to sleep," my mother had said to me. And so, as the room filled with soldiers, and as my mother's voice rose in inquiry and protest, I tried to pretend, at least, that I was sleeping. I shut my eyes tight and breathed slowly, lying as still as a mouse.

I heard the men come near the bed. I thought my heart would burst as it beat against my side. Then my mother's voice came, strong and reassuring.

"Can't you see the little one is sleeping?" she said to the soldiers. "Certainly no one has been here! Why do you come, disturbing the peace of innocent women and children?"

"Sleep, sleep," I whispered to myself.

It seemed an eternity that the soldiers stood

around my bed. Then they must have gone to look into the wardrobe and the scullery, for I heard doors opening and closing, and rough voices arguing and expostulating in Spanish.

Is it surprising that the scene made a violent and unforgettable impression on my young mind? I cannot, of course, remember all the details, for it must have been when I was not more than four or five years old; but the intensity of emotion that I felt, the terror and excitement, are as vivid to me to-day as though it had all happened a few weeks ago. I experienced for the first time in my life a new emotion, a feeling of dreadful responsibility, for my mother had made me realise that, for her sake, as well as for that of the poor wounded boy, I must not move or cry out. With all the strength I had at my command, I obeyed her injunction; and I learned, in those few moments of intense experience, a useful lesson in self-control.

When the soldiers finally left, the tension broke. I am afraid I cried hard; and I remember that, for several days after, I could not hear my mother refer to the incident without an inexplicable feeling of distress and almost physical anguish.

We lived for some time in this little village in

northern Spain, and my memories of those far-off days contain a sort of composite picture of our occupations and interests. I am conscious, first of all, of the heat of the summer sun, the parched streets, the sun-baked plaza where a few poor pepper trees strove in vain to mitigate the heat of the day. In vivid contrast to the torrid atmosphere outside, our little house, thick-walled and solid, was a haven of delicious gloom.

I was, on the whole, something of a lizard, and rather enjoyed the scorching sunlight, but my mother kept me indoors during the noon hours, allowing me to go out only when she considered it safe. She would permit me to sit on the doorstep and watch the world go by from that vantage point.

What an interesting world it appeared to my young eyes! Stray dogs played in the streets. Passing beggars limped by. A boy driving a herd of goats to the well at the end of our street brought a breath of the rocky hills to our doorsteps. The *cacique,* the rich man of the village, occasionally hurried by, intent on his affairs. I think he was the only one that ever hurried in the whole township. Every one else strolled or lounged from doorstep to doorstep. Perhaps his wealth was due to this abil-

ity of his to get somewhere quickly, or perhaps the habit had been acquired as an unfortunate result of his money! At any rate, he was the most notable figure under my observation; yet he had little interest for me, compared to the fascination I found in watching the gypsies who came occasionally to our village and who seemed to me the most interesting beings in the whole world.

When they came to sell baskets on the plaza and to trade their ill-gotten possessions with the housewives of the town, I would slip down from my perch on the doorstep and cautiously approach them. How beautiful and romantic they seemed to me! Their brightly coloured rags, their sparkling eyes and animated gestures, their incomprehensible language, enthralled me.

An added charm was perhaps derived from the fact that this was forbidden fruit. My mother had warned me repeatedly to have nothing to do with the *gitanas*.

"They steal little girls!" she assured me.

But I was not in the least afraid. I may even have thought that it would be rather amusing to be stolen!

Nothing about the gypsies enchanted me as much

as their songs and dances. I positively thrilled with delight at the sound of the throbbing, rhythmic music. I could never get enough of it, and one day I decided to follow a band of gypsies to their camp.

I had been sitting, quietly watching them pack up their things and make ready to start. My mother was in the house and did not notice me get down from my perch and follow them. I trotted along the road in their wake, regardless of dust and stones, and with only one idea in my head—not to lose sight of my friends, who, though they walked slowly enough, had long legs, compared to mine, and were some distance ahead of me.

Finally, one of them looked back and saw my small figure in the distance. They waited until I had joined them, and then asked me where I belonged. It was fairly late in the day by this time; and as they had reached their encampment, they decided to have supper before taking me home. I was delighted to stay, and began right away to make friends with the girls and boys in the camp.

In the meantime, my mother had discovered my absence. She looked for me everywhere, called in the neighbours and instituted a search. She asked

every one in the village whether I had been seen. Finally, in a frenzy of anxiety, she rushed to the town hall and begged for help. The whole police force was called into action; and after interminable conversations and arguments, a body of *gendarmes* was sent to the gypsy camp to see whether I had been carried off into captivity.

When my mother and the group of impressive guardians of the law finally reached me, they found me as happy as a little queen, dancing and singing in the midst of the gypsy band, like a true *gitanella.* I was most reluctant to leave my new friends; and had my mother not been there, I probably should have refused to budge.

After this adventure, I was watched more carefully. Although I often saw my friends, the gypsies, in the marketplace, I did not again attempt to join them. From the safe distance of my doorstep, I admired their dances and listened to their songs, many of which I learned to sing myself.

Was it because of this that, when I came to act Carmen, I never needed to be taught the dances and gestures of the Spanish gypsies? Was it because of these early years in Spain that I seemed to know by instinct how to carry the shawl, how to

walk and move and dance, when I found myself impersonating the lawless *gitana* of Bizet's famous opera? I do not know, for who can tell what memories and associations remain in one's inner consciousness. Surely the impressions of childhood are a permanent and vital part of all one's later life, and of my early contact with these strange people undoubtedly some trace remains imbedded deep in my mind.

Not long after this, when I was in my seventh year, my parents decided to go back to their native land. I spoke only Spanish, and they had the greatest difficulty in the world forcing me to learn French. When I had finally mastered my new language, I was sent to a convent at Millau, not far from the home of my father's family.

The atmosphere of religion and mysticism in which I found myself in the convent made a deep impression upon me. I became extremely devout; and when I was confirmed, I was fully determined to become a nun. Apparently this kind of temporary "vocation," or call to the religious life, is not unusual among singers and actresses. I know two very great artists who have been through the same experience.

My holidays were passed in the old family *oustal* where my father's sister lived. Here I found everything that could delight the heart of a child. The old house, the rambling farm buildings, the barns with their cattle and sheep, the meadows, pastures and gardens were my playground.

My aunt's garden—how well I remember it! Ah, that delicious corner of paradise, where I spent the happiest hours of my youth, and where I dreamed the first dreams of my girlhood! It was built up behind the house in terraces, as are all gardens on the mountainside. Stone retaining walls divided it, and flagged steps led from one level to the next. Each terrace had its own particular use. One was for the vegetable garden, another for the fruit trees, another for shrubs and berry bushes.

On the highest terrace of all was the flower garden, my own particular haunt and delight. Modest flowers grew there; lilacs and marigolds, sweet-william, forget-me-nots, and the lovely odorous blooms of the wallflowers, particularly dear to my aunt, who used to call them by their old-fashioned name of *violiers*.

I would spend hours and hours on the upper

terrace, warming myself like a little lizard in the sun, drinking in its strength and radiance. In the midst of my noisy, romping games I would become suddenly quiet, contemplative, overcome with a desire to lie on the warm sod and dream of vague and far-off things. Sometimes I would betake myself to the corner farthest removed from the house, where the beehives were installed. There I would remain standing immovable, as I had been taught, watching the bees at their fascinating task.

When I shut my eyes, I can still see before me the picture of the sunset hour in that peaceful garden. My aunt is knitting her interminable stocking. Margarido, her faithful servant, distaff in hand, works with rapid, skilful fingers, singing those very folksongs which, to this day, I sing before another sun—the footlights! I, alone, am idle, watching, half-hypnotised, the circling of the bees, which every evening gather in dark masses near their hives, buzzing and humming in unison, as though chanting an evening hymn.

"They are saying good night to the sun," Margarido would invariably remark.

My aunt would nod her approval, and I would

open my eyes wider still with interest and astonishment.

Suddenly the angelus rang. My aunt recited aloud her evening prayer, to which I made, rather vaguely, the proper responses. We stood for a moment, watching the sinking sun, then turned and went into the house for our evening meal.

Margarido, my aunt's servant, was an orphan who had given herself, of her own accord, to the Calvet family in her early girlhood. It was an old and honoured custom in our part of the world, for girls who had been brought up in an orphanage or by the charity of some religious organisation, to choose in this way a home of adoption. They became proud servants in the families they selected, refusing wages, and working freely and gladly in return for the good food, the comfortable lodging, and the home which was provided for them. They were treated as members of the families, and sometimes became the mainstay, almost the mistress, of the household.

Margarido was one of these devoted and capable women. She was indefatigable, up at dawn, in bed the last of all, hard-working, industrious, loyal and good—ah, infinitely good!

As for me, she adored and spoiled me. I heard later that as a young girl she had nourished a dumb and entirely unrequited affection for my father, who was hardly more than a boy when she first came to our house. Poor lovelorn little creature, silent and resigned! She turned her affection from him to the family as a whole, and finally to me, whom she cared for with a special and intense love that made her sometimes over-indulgent in my regard.

She gave me everything I wanted—the best fruits of the garden, the most delicious of all the jams and jellies that she made. I shall never forget a basket of cherries she let me eat one day. They were delectable, the first of the season, treasures, but they nearly killed me!

She remained with my aunt many years after I grew up, and finally died at her post, very old, but as active and energetic as ever. On the day of her death she rose as usual and went about her business. Suddenly, in the midst of her household duties, she collapsed on the floor. My aunt rushed to her. It was too late. She had died instantly, without a plaint, working to the last moment, as she would have wished. My poor aunt did not live much longer. She followed her faithful servant

to the grave a few months after Margarido's death. All this was, of course, much later. In my childhood, these two dear women were in their prime, and surrounded me during my holidays with all the joys a child could wish.

At night, the great hall of the *oustal* was as fascinating to me as was the garden by day. Vast and smoky, it sheltered all sorts of legends and dreams. Here, masters and servants assembled nightly for prayers. Here, in the long evenings, the women sat spinning in the flickering firelight. The old shepherd Blaise regaled us with ghost stories, each more dreadful than the last. The women crossed themselves. I trembled with terror and finally went to bed to dream of goblins, gnomes and werewolves. My appetite for the marvellous fed upon these tales. I actually experienced a sensation of pleasure in being afraid.

Once back at the convent, it was my turn to make my comrades tremble. I told them the tales I had heard, with additions and amplifications of my own. I finally discovered a way of singing them in a weird minor key, a sort of melodious chant, which I improvised as I went along, and which added greatly to the effect.

I remember hearing a colloquy between one of the Sisters of the convent and a small comrade of mine.

"What is the matter with you, my child?" the Sister asked. "Why are you crying?"

"Oh, *ma sœur!*" the child answered, all in tears. "What fun we are having! Emma Calvé is making us cry with her songs!"

I think it was from that day that I began to be an artist, for it was then that I learned to express my own emotions, to externalise them, to convey them to my listeners. How thrilled, how intoxicated with delight I was, when I felt my little audience respond to my mood! Their applause gave me a hitherto untasted sense of power, an exaltation, an indescribable joy! Ever since that tender age, I have been dependent upon the exhilaration which comes with success.

I appeared before my first grown-up audience on a graduation day at the convent. This time I could not make use of my ghost stories, but I had to sing, with all the care and dignity I could muster, "Les Hirondelles" by Félicien David and "Le Lac" by Lamartine.

The Bishop of Rodez, who was officiating on this occasion, turned to the Mother Superior as I finished.

"How beautiful!" he exclaimed. "What a lovely, what an unusual voice! And her face is extraordinarily expressive! She is an artist!"

CHAPTER II

YEARS OF STUDY

I LEFT the convent when I was about fifteen. My father was absent in Italy, and my mother, my two brothers and I remained in the little town where I had been educated. Our neighbours and friends were not long in making up their minds that I was to become a great artist. They talked of it incessantly and asked me to take part in all the celebrations and ceremonies that took place in the village. All this interest and attention impressed my mother. She became accustomed by degrees to the idea of my going on the stage.

"Every one tells me a brilliant future is in store for you," she said to me one day. "If you succeed, we shall be able to give your brothers a better education! It's worth trying! *Le bon Dieu* will help us!"

She was advised to take me to Paris, for it was only there that I could learn to sing. It was a formidable undertaking in those days; but without

further hesitation, my mother gathered together her modest resources and started ahead of me, to make arrangements for our move to Paris.

In the meantime, I remained with my aunt and spent my days, as I had when I was a little child, in the garden of our old house. The bees still fascinated me as they had of old. They represented so many golden, lovely things! During my convent days, they had provided me not only with delicious honey, but with surprises of all kinds as well.

"I will buy you a pretty dress at the St. Jean," my aunt used to say. "Margarido will take the honey to market, and with the money it brings I will get you whatever you want."

So to me the bees seemed like true fairies, dispensing all good things, from the golden honey itself to the still more magic gold of the *louis d'or,* into which it could be transmuted. Now, on the eve of the greatest adventure I had yet undertaken, these winged fays came again with their tiny bags of treasure.

"Take this," said my aunt, pressing into my hand a knitted bag full of gold pieces. "It's all that we have made from the sale of the honey! Take it, and may it help you on your way!"

My darling little aunt! I can see her now, holding me in her arms on that day of parting. She was deeply moved, feeling that I was embarking on a long and dangerous journey. Margarido, as she packed my bags, expressed the anxiety that they both shared.

"Poor *Fantoune,* poor child!" she murmured, shaking her head mournfully, as she leaned over her task. "Where is she bound for? Paris is so big, so distant! Who knows what will happen to her? She is going so far away from us!"

She was almost in tears by the time everything was ready. I kissed my aunt and hurried away, followed by the old servant carrying my bags. We went down the hill path to the highway below, where I could catch the diligence for Clermont and Paris. I must have looked a melancholy little Manon, standing by the side of the road surrounded by bags and boxes, waiting with a sinking heart for the stage coach and my fate!

When it came, the only seat vacant was on the very top. I was hoisted up there onto the *imperiale,* and found myself installed next to an old gentleman who did his best to make me comfortable. I was grateful for his kindness, and, exhausted by

my emotions and, lulled by the rocking of the coach, I dropped off to sleep.

Suddenly I felt an arm around my waist. My old friend was becoming a little too attentive! I freed myself with a jerk, administering at the same time a resounding slap. The blow made such a noise that every one on the coach knew what had happened. The driver stopped the horses. Every one jumped out and talked at the top of their lungs. A sympathetic young man from the interior offered me a seat beside his parents. For the rest of the trip, until I joined my mother at Clermont, I was well cared for by these kind people. What a journey it was in those days from La Bastide to Paris! We went by the way of Clermont-Ferrand and Moulin. It took us days and days, where now it is only a matter of hours. The way was long, and we stopped every two or three houses, to change horses.

Hospitable taverns opened their doors to the weary travellers, wherever the relays were made. What noble feasts were spread in the kitchens of those roadhouses! Chickens and ducks turned on spits before roaring fires, in appetising readiness! One could eat like a king of all the good things of

the earth, for the vast sum of one franc fifty—about ten cents at the present rate of exchange! Oh, times forever past! *Où sont les neiges d'antan?*

Once settled in Paris, we were faced with the problem of finding a teacher. My mother, with her usual courage and energy, went straight to the leading singing masters of the day, and put the proposition to them in these terms:

"Give my daughter a hearing. You yourself will judge what talent she may have. I am not rich, but you can have entire confidence in me. We will pay you as soon as she has succeeded!"

She was most fortunate in finding a well-known singing teacher, Jules Puget, a retired tenor of the opera, who was willing to accept these conditions. The lessons which he gave me were excellent. He taught the principles of the Italian *bel canto,* with which he was thoroughly familiar. He was a talented artist and had created several important rôles during his long career.

At the end of three years of study, he advised me to obtain some concert engagements in order to accustom myself, little by little, to singing in public. My very first appearance was therefore on the concert stage in the tiny hall of the Théâtre de la

Tour d'Auvergne. The building has long since disappeared, but at that time it was a favourite place for young singers to make their débuts. I was given fifty francs for my songs. With what pride, with what triumph, I carried my earnings back to my mother!

Like all singers, I have been asked repeatedly at what age I began to sing. It seems to me I have always sung! In my earliest childhood I used to hum all day long, imitating everything I heard around me. My mother had a very beautiful natural voice. Although not a musician, she sang charmingly all the old songs of France, folksongs in the dialects of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, shepherds' songs from our own country of Aveyron. She had an enormous repertory. One day we tried to count and classify them. We found that, between us, we knew about two hundred!

In Paris we lived, my mother, my brothers and I, very modestly indeed, in a little apartment on Montmartre. I left home before eight every morning, walking halfway across Paris to my lessons, through rain or snow, in soaking shoes. I grew rapidly and I was very thin.

Emma Calvé During Her Student Years in Paris

Calvé in "Le Chevalier Jean"

Next door to us was a market run by a burly butcher and his wife. They greatly enjoyed listening to my singing when, during the hot summer days, I practised with my windows open. One day my mother stopped at the shop to do her marketing.

"Your daughter has a pretty voice," the butcher remarked, as he prepared her order. "My wife and I think she is a wonder!"

"It's very kind of you to say so," my mother answered. "She works very hard, and I hope some day——"

"Yes, she's a fine singer," he interrupted, "but she's too thin. Much too thin! She ought to eat lots of beefsteaks and cutlets!"

My mother was taken by surprise at what appeared to be a rather crude way of increasing trade. Before she could answer, however, the astonishing man continued:

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said. "To prove to you how much confidence I have in your daughter's future, I'll open an account for you at this shop. You can pay me when she makes her début!"

I have never forgotten these good people. When I was singing at the Opéra Comique, we always

sent tickets to the musical butcher and his family. I have no doubt he sat there, telling any one who would listen to him:

"Do you see that wonderful singer? It is entirely due to me that she is in such fine form!"

CHAPTER III

DÉBUTS IN BRUSSELS AND PARIS

AFTER my first public appearance in Paris, I travelled through France, giving a number of concerts with the Philharmonic Societies. These first successes increased my confidence, and I returned to Paris resolved to pursue my career with even greater determination. Our resources were rapidly diminishing. I was not yet twenty, but it behooved me to make my début immediately. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to sing for the director of the Théâtre de la Monnaie de Bruxelles. He listened to me attentively, and seemed agreeably impressed.

"Could you be ready to sing the rôle of Marguerite in 'Faust' within two weeks?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered, without the least hesitation. As a matter of fact, I knew the ballad of the King of Thulé from "Faust," and not another note! But I could not miss the opportunity. I signed the contract and immediately started to study the rôle.

It was no easy matter to memorise a whole part, words and music, in the short time at my disposal, but I had unbounded enthusiasm and an excellent memory. Three weeks later I made my début in Brussels. It was under these circumstances that I achieved my first operatic success! Undoubtedly I was extremely inexperienced; but my youth, my voice, and the simple, naïve manner in which I interpreted my rôle, were apparently effective.

Immediately after this, I sang in Massenet's "Hérodiade," and Cherubin and the Countess in the "Noces de Figaro," in all of which I was received most cordially. My voice had a very great range, going from low A in the deep chest tones to E above high C in the high head notes. In fact, my range was so great that I was able to sing both Hérodias and Salomé in "Hérodiade," the first being a contralto and the second a soprano rôle.

I remember that I made a great hit at my first performance of Cherubin. Such an absurd incident! I laugh to this day when I think of it.

I was, as I have said, very slender at this time, and the appearance of my thin legs, spider's legs as my mother called them, gave me the gravest concern. I hit upon a brilliant plan of overcoming

this defect; and when I appeared on the stage the first night of the "Noces de Figaro," enormous calves of cotton swelled the dimensions of my silken tights! The old gentlemen in the front rows trained their opera glasses on these superb affairs. I was conscious of their attention and proud of my success until I left the stage at the end of my first scene. In the wings the infuriated director was waiting for me.

"Ah, ça!" he shouted, pointing at my unfortunate legs. "What are those hideous lumps, I'd like to know! I am tempted to stick pins into them! Stupid child! Don't you know that every one is laughing at you? Do you expect any one to believe that those fat excrescences belong to you? Take them off instantly!"

And so it was that for the second act I had to make my entrance with my poor beanstalk legs all unadorned! My mortification was intense. I tried to cover my legs with my cloak, but it was impossible. The audience saw the change instantly, and was highly amused. I was applauded and cheered uproariously, and indeed I doubt if I ever created quite so much excitement at the Monnaie as I did on that night of painful memory!

I earned in Brussels during my first year the vast sum of seven hundred francs a month. A fortune! How little would I have believed it, had I been told that some day I would get ten thousand francs for a single evening's performance!

After my first season, I went home for a rest and holiday. I was eager to share the news of my good fortune with all my relatives and friends in the town where I had been educated.

"What! You are singing in a theatre!" exclaimed my aunt, when I told her of my engagement at Brussels. "My poor child! You will be everlastingly damned! Who would ever have thought such a thing possible? A little girl of our family going to be an actress—one of those women who could not be buried in consecrated ground in the old days! The curé himself has told me all about it. It's terrible, terrible!" she cried, rocking herself back and forth in her chair and bursting into tears. "I will pray for you!"

When I visited the convent where I had been educated, I was received in much the same way. I arrived while the service was in progress and so I went up into the gallery of the chapel and sang Gounod's "Ave Maria" during the mass. How

proud and happy I was to show my former teachers all the progress I had made! The Mother Superior received me afterward, affectionately but sadly.

"Alas, my dear child!" she said. "What an unfortunate end for one who had hoped to take the veil! That a former president of the Children of Mary should go on the stage is sad indeed. Yet Monsieur l'Évêque foresaw it! He said long ago that you were a born artist." And she added, in the same words as my aunt, "We will pray for you!"

The most curious thing of all, however, happened the day that I visited the little village from whence our family came. The mayor ordered the tocsin rung to call the peasants in from the fields. They came running from all sides, just as they were, carrying their pitchforks, their rakes and scythes, expecting at the very least to find the town hall in flames! The mayor leaned out of the window and addressed the crowd in the square below.

"I have made you come here," he proclaimed in stentorian tones, "to listen to a little nightingale of these parts. It will sing to you from this very window. Listen well, and I am sure you will ac-

claim our accomplished compatriot, Mademoiselle Emma!"

Standing at the window, my eyes raised to our beautiful mountains, I sang with all my strength, with all my heart, gay songs and sad songs—everything I knew. I did my best, wishing to show all my skill to these men and women who had known me since my birth.

Finally I stopped. A dead silence greeted my efforts. Astonished, a little hurt, I went down among my listeners, addressing myself to my old friend the shepherd.

"Blaise," I said, "what is the matter? Why don't you applaud me? Did I sing as badly as all that?"

The old man was hardly able to hide his emotion.

"Poor child! Poor little girl!" he stammered, his voice breaking with tears. "How you scream! How it must hurt you! You are wearing out your life! You are wearing it out! Such waste of strength! It's dreadful."

So was the news that filled my mother and myself with joy and pride received by our people! Every one was heartbroken, even to my cousin, the Canon, who, that I might enter into paradise, said his mass

every morning for twenty years for the salvation of my soul!

In spite of this discouraging attitude at home, I continued my engagement in Brussels. My master, Puget, in order to give me confidence, had assured me that my performance was perfect. At that age, one is credulous! I soon discovered for myself, however, that I had much to learn; and when the next vacation began, I returned to Paris to work. I had to find a new teacher, as my dear old master had died during my absence. I went, therefore, to Madame Marchesi, with whom I studied for about six months.

While I was her pupil, it was my good fortune to hear and see the marvellous Krauss at close range. I had a tremendous admiration for this great lyric tragedian. Her voice was not beautiful, and she had occasionally a marked tremolo. Her appearance ordinarily was unattractive, even ugly; but when she sang, she was transfigured. She became beautiful, inspired! She was able to thrill even the audiences of the Opera, that public of *dilettanti* so difficult to please or move! I heard her in Gounod's "Sappho," in the "Tribut de Za-

mora" and "Henri VIII" of Saint-Saëns, in fact in all her famous creations.

On the first night of the "Tribut" she surpassed even herself. It was in the battle scene where, as an ardent patriot, desperately wounded, she sang a battle hymn to the soldiers that surrounded her. Dragging herself on her knees across the stage, she reached the footlights. In a final effort that seemed to lift her out of herself, she rose to her feet, singing *"Debout, enfants de l'Iberie."*

I and my companions were in the first row of the orchestra. It was like a sword-thrust—a physical blow. We cried out and leaped to our feet. The whole audience rose, electrified, transported, surging forward in answer to her inspired call.

One afternoon at about this same period, Krauss was singing at the home of Madame Marchesi. Liszt was present. He sat silent and unmoved amidst the enthusiastic acclamations of the rest of us. I felt that he did not appreciate my idol, and was almost indignant with him for his indifference.

In the course of the afternoon, Madame Marchesi asked him if he would accompany Madame Krauss, who was about to sing the "Erlkönig." "I do not

wish to," he answered brutally. "She is too ugly, and she has a tremolo."

His hostess, however, quietly insisted.

"Very well, then," he conceded grudgingly. "I warn you now, though, that if her singing does not satisfy me, I will stop in the middle and leave."

"I am not in the least anxious," Madame Marchesi answered.

Liszt rose and crossed the room, with obvious reluctance. I can see him now, as he sat down at the piano. His lion's mane thrown back, his talons crashing down on the sonorous keyboard, he attacked Schubert's admirable prelude. He, alone, with his incredible force, was as mighty as a whole orchestra.

Madame Krauss, who had heard the uncomplimentary remarks of the great man, rose to her feet. Pale but resolute, her eyes fixed on the master's face, she began to sing. Almost immediately he raised his head, attentive, surprised. His eyes met those of the tragedian, and could not leave her face.

In a poignant communion, intense, transcendent, their spirits met and mingled. They swept us with them, in their tragic ecstasy. It was tremendous, indescribable! Little by little, Liszt had risen to

his feet. As the last notes died away, he held out his arms to the inspired singer.

"Forgive me, my sister, my child!" he exclaimed, in a voice broken with emotion.

Krauss, completely exhausted by her prodigious effort, could only murmur "Thank you," as she sank into her chair.

More than twenty years later, all the leading musicians of the day were asked in a newspaper interview to describe the moment in their lives when music had most deeply moved them. Without exception, all those who had been present on that unforgettable occasion answered: "The day, at Madame Marchesi's, when Liszt accompanied Madame Krauss in the 'Erlkönig.' "

I myself was so profoundly impressed that never since then have I dared to sing that admirable ballad, feeling myself incapable of reaching such tremendous heights.

Not long after this, while I was still a pupil of Madame Marchesi, I was engaged by Victor Maurel to create the leading rôle in Theodore Dubois' opera, "Aben-Hamet" at the Théâtre des Italiens. The celebrated barytone sang Aben-Hamet in this production. This rôle was one of his

most remarkable creations. He gave me invaluable advice and assistance in developing my own part. I have always been deeply grateful to him for the lessons in lyric declamation which I received from him, and which have greatly influenced my artistic career.

After I had sung for a few months at the Théâtre des Italiens, Carvalho, director of the Opéra Comique, engaged me for the principal rôle in de Joncière's "Chevalier Jean" in which I had a considerable success, due to my youth, my voice, and the striking picture I made in the gorgeous costumes, unusual in those days, which were provided for the part.

I sang Cherubin in Mozart's "Noces de Figaro" with Madame Carvalho, wife of the director. She was at the end of her long and successful career, but she consented to sing for us in order to teach us her exquisite art. I knew her well and loved her greatly. It was she who created the leading rôles in Gounod's finest operas. An accomplished singer, possessing an admirable diction, she personified French lyric art in all its refinement, its restraint and charm. She was the idol of her generation.

I remained two years at the Opéra Comique; but in spite of my voice and my dramatic ability, my success was not striking. I felt that I could learn much by a change of environment, and I longed for Italy, feeling that there, in contact with a new world of art, and under warmer skies, I could best develop and expand.

My desire was achieved when I obtained an engagement at the Scala of Milan. There I was asked to create the leading rôle in the opera "Flora Mirabilio" by Samara.

CHAPTER IV

SUFFERING AND SICKNESS

I WENT to Milan with all the faults and all the advantages of my youth. My seasons at the Opéra Comique had taught me nothing. I seemed only to have acquired a new timidity which paralysed my faculties at the most crucial moment. In spite of the burning fires within me, I gave the effect of being cold, for I was unable to communicate with my audience, or in any way to express my emotions.

The night of my début at the Scala, I was horribly frightened. I sang out of tune and lost my head completely. The audience hissed me, and quite rightly! How often, since then, have I blessed that fortunate hissing which made me realise my shortcomings and spurred me to undertake the serious studies which I so much needed!

I returned to Paris in a state of despair, ready to make corsets rather than continue my career. I was rescued from this fate by M. Hugel, the

well-known publisher, who took me to Madame Rosina Laborde. This remarkable singing mistress is so widely known that I need not enlarge upon her extraordinary gifts as a teacher. Her conscientiousness and her patience were beyond praise, and it was from her that I learned the fundamentals of my art.

During the period that followed my disastrous appearance at Milan, I changed very greatly. Not only did my voice improve through the wise and experienced teaching of Madame Laborde, but my character and personality developed and crystallised. I am reminded in this connection of a remark made by Madame Malibran about La Sontag, at a time when the two famous opera singers were appearing at the same theatre. Each one had her ardent followers and partisans, and one day an admirer of Malibran, trying to be ingratiating and pleasant, began to speak disparagingly of La Sontag, saying that she had neither feeling nor artistic temperament.

"Wait until she has lived and suffered," answered Malibran. "You will be astonished at the transformation which will take place in her personality; you will see its effect on her art."

Emma Calvé at Twenty

Calvé as Santuzza

It so happened that not long after this conversation La Sontag experienced a deep misfortune. Returning later to the very theatre where she had been criticised for her lack of feeling, she achieved a triumphant success. The beautiful statue had come to life. La Malibran had foretold truly.

My own experience was very much the same. During the first years of my career, I was, as I have said before, unable to express what I felt. I often heard the same criticism made of me as had been made of La Sontag in her early days.

At the very moment that I started my work with Madame Laborde, I suffered a great sorrow, the first tragedy that had touched my young life. Of that I still cannot speak. It is enough that the shock was so violent that I fell seriously ill. For a whole year, my condition was almost desperate, but my youth and natural vitality struggled against the forces of sickness and despair, and finally triumphed.

The process was slow, and my convalescence long. During the interminable months of recovery, I read a great deal and meditated on many things which until that time had not held my attention. In the crucible of pain and suffering, my

spirit seemed to have developed a new sensitiveness, a new power of sympathy, a wider understanding of life and art.

When, later, I returned to the stage, I found that I knew at last how to communicate with my audience, how to reach the public and make it feel my joy or sorrow, my happiness or pain.

CHAPTER V

FINAL PREPARATION

MY health restored, I took up my work with Madame Laborde, preparatory to continuing my career. I was now more ready than ever to understand and appreciate what my teacher had to give me, and my progress was remarkably rapid.

Madame Laborde had had a long and successful operatic career. A pupil of Piermarini and a friend of Cherubini, she had appeared for many years in Italy. At one time, she had sung with Patti and Alboni, and had made several extended tours with that great contralto. Her début, however, had taken place in Paris, not in Italy. She appeared for the first time at the Théâtre des Italiens in 1840. She was then only sixteen years old, but to her dying day she never forgot that terrifying occasion, and used often to tell us about it. Just as she was about to make her entrance on the stage, her singing master said to her:

"If you are unlucky enough not to sing well, I

will never come near you again! I will be in the front row of the orchestra, listening to you."

The poor child was so petrified with fear that her voice broke in her first phrase. Courageously, like a good little girl, she began over again; and, in order to show that she really knew how, she proceeded to improvise eight or ten cadenzas, one after the other. The public, enchanted by her sweet ingenuousness, went wild with joy. Her success was complete. Even her master was disarmed!

She was a member of the Paris Opera for many years. Then, after her Italian tour, she returned to Paris and founded her school of singing. She had a truly phenomenal patience with her pupils. I remember on one occasion she made me repeat a phrase from the mad scene of Ophelia eighty separate times. I was ready to cry with nervousness and exhaustion, when she finally allowed me to rest.

"That will do very nicely," she remarked tranquilly, at the end of the ordeal. "You are worthy of being my pupil, for you are beginning to learn patience!"

I truly believe that I will be able to sing that

phrase on my deathbed, so deeply is it imbedded in my larynx.

Madame Laborde had an impeccable style and perfect diction. She allowed no compromise, forbidding all *portamento* and bad attacks. She called me her best, her most grateful, pupil, and I had in turn a very deep affection for her, full of respect and admiration. No cloud ever came between us or dimmed the glow of our long and perfect friendship.

During the years that I knew her, she told me countless delightful stories. It seemed to me that, through her, I came to know all the artists of her period. She had known Madame Malibran, La Pasta, La Sontag, La Frezzolini, Grizi, Mario, Tamburini, Lablache. She would describe to us their way of singing, their gestures and stage craft, all the traditions of the fine old Italian school. She had an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes and a ready wit. Her gift of description was remarkable. Her stories usually began, "It was in the year 1840."

She has known the mother of Patti, apparently a most disagreeable woman. One evening this fiery lady was singing with a companion who had false eyebrows. At that time it was the custom to shave

the natural brows and glue on false ones at a more dramatic angle. Patti's mother, jealous and furious at the success of her comrade, began to stare at her fixedly.

"What is the matter?" the other whispered under her breath.

"Your right eyebrow has fallen off!" came the answer, *sotto voce*.

The poor victim, horrified, tore off her left eyebrow, and remained for the rest of the act with only her right one in place!

On another occasion this high-tempered singer, whose besetting sin seems to have been jealousy, became annoyed at the applause given Lablache, with whom she was singing. She seized one of the wreaths destined for him, and, planting it on her own head, approached the footlights.

"I have well deserved it myself!" she exclaimed, to the astonished audience.

Apropos of Lablache. I recall a most diverting incident. He was staying at one time in the same hotel in which General Tom Thumb, the dwarf, had an apartment. Tom Thumb was very popular and had many visitors. One day a lady, seeking the General, entered Lablache's apartment by

mistake. She found herself face to face with the enormous singer, who, beside being very tall, was corpulent as well.

"I was calling on General Tom Thumb!" the astonished visitor stammered.

"I am he," answered the giant gravely.

The lady, thoroughly bewildered, protested in surprise. "But, Monsieur, I was told that Tom Thumb was the smallest man in the world!"

"Ah, yes," Lablache answered. "That is true, in public. But when I am at home, I make myself comfortable!"

Madame Laborde said to me one day, "My dear child, take careful note of the way in which I teach, for you are one of the valiant spirits, and when you are old you will be giving lessons in your turn."

"Oh, no! Never!" I exclaimed. "Never in the world! I have not enough patience!"

Yet fate willed that I should go back to the very same apartment where Madame Laborde gave lessons for more than forty years, and where I myself had studied so long!

It happened just after the war, during the time of great shortage of apartments in Paris. I had searched long and vainly for a place in which to

live. One night I dreamed vividly of Madame Laborde. She came to my bedside, saying to me with her sweet smile, just as she used to when she was encouraging me to work:

"Patience, courage! You will come to me again!"

The next morning, impulsive as always, I rushed to the house where Madame Laborde had lived. I asked the concierge whether there was an apartment for rent. She assured me that there was nothing vacant, but at the same time told me that Madame Laborde's niece was in Paris and could tell me the exact situation. I went to her immediately.

"Lily," I said, "you must rent me your apartment! You are here so seldom, you really don't need it. You are always in the country."

"No, Calvé," she answered discouragingly. "I have told you twenty times that I will not rent it. When I do come to Paris, even though it is not often, I like to return to my dear godmother's rooms. I am so happy to be once more among her things."

I told her my dream, hoping to soften her heart, but she interrupted me, saying that we must go to

see her husband, who was ill at the moment. As soon as we came into the sick room, the patient greeted me with these words:

"My dear Calvé, I have just had the most extraordinary dream! Not about you—about our godmother. She came to my bedside and said, 'Calvé must come to our house! She must come right away!' "

"When did you have this dream?" I asked.

"About three o'clock in the morning," he answered.

On the same night, at the same hour, we had had the same dream! We were all very much touched, and we talked long of our dear dead friend, recalling incidents and stories, evoking the memory of the charming woman who had been like a mother to us all. In the end, they let me have the coveted apartment, where I lived and taught in the setting that so vividly recalled my youth, my studies and my aspirations.

CHAPTER VI

A TOUR IN ITALY

I STUDIED for a year with Madame Laborde, and made such effective progress that I was immediately reëngaged in Italy. I appeared at the San Carlos of Naples, where I sang Ophelia with Victor Maurel as Hamlet, and where I appeared in Bizet's "Pêcheurs de Perles" with the tenor Lucia, a gifted singer, with whom I was later to create Mascagni's "Amico Fritz."

I sang for two consecutive years in Naples, before the most amusing public it has ever been my privilege to encounter. A group of *dilettanti,* gentlemen of taste and leisure, assisted regularly at every performance, criticising the actors and actresses, praising and blaming in loud tones, punctuating the performance with exclamations and ejaculations, to the vast amusement of the rest of the audience. One day, at the house of some friends, my attention was arrested by the appearance of one of the guests.

"Tell me," I said to a Neapolitan acquaintance, "who is that distinguished old man? It seems to me that I have seen him before. What is his profession? What does he do?"

"He is a subscriber to the San Carlo!" answered my informer, with perfect seriousness, as though this description explained everything. "He is, in fact, the senior member of the fraternity. Allow me to present him."

The old gentleman proved a most entertaining friend. He described to me the fatiguing duties of an *abonnato,* as a subscriber is called in Italian.

An *abonnato* had to be at the theatre early in the morning to watch the rehearsal of the ballet dancers. At half-past one, he returned to give his opinion on the performance of the orchestra. Later in the afternoon, he gave his entire attention to the rehearsals of the singers. The evening, of course, was devoted to the regular performance. A full day's work!

My friend must have been ninety years old, but he was still pursuing his arduous profession. He had known all the singers of what he described as "the great era." He had even known La Malibran when she was hardly more than a child. Her father,

Garcia, was a terror! He taught his daughters to sing with the help of a cudgel, beating them when they did not do exactly as he commanded. One night La Malibran was singing Desdemona to his Othello. As they made their entrance together, he turned to his daughter.

"Do not forget what I told you to do in the last act!" he whispered in a threatening undertone. "If you dare make a mistake, you will catch it from me."

As the evening wore on, the little Desdemona became more and more nervous. She blundered several times, and her father's anger rose. By the time they reached the scene in which Othello strangles Desdemona, Garcia was in a fury. He glared at the poor child ferociously, his face contorted with rage. Suddenly she became panic-stricken, and, running from him, threw herself into the orchestra pit.

"Help! Murder!" she screamed. "He's after me! He's going to kill me in real earnest!"

The first violinist caught her in his arms and, we suppose, reassured her successfully. At any rate, it happened that a few years later she became

the wife of this musician, whose name was de Bériot.

La Frezzolini, a dramatic personality of the old days, was another star in my *abonnato's* firmament. At one period of her career, she had contracted for a tour in South America. The day of her début in Buenos Aires, she was told that her lover, who had remained in Italy, was unfaithful to her. Mad with jealousy, she determined at all costs to reach him. She purloined her maid's cloak and passport, and made her escape from the hotel. A ship was lying in the harbour, anchor weighed, ready to sail for Europe. She managed to get on board unnoticed.

Several hours later, when the curtain should have been rising on her first appearance in the Argentine capital, she was well out at sea. This pretty piece of folly cost her three million francs! *C'est beau, le passion!* I can imagine the eloquent despair of her manager, I can see the expression of his face, when he discovered the flight of his song bird!

In spite of my cordial reception at Naples and elsewhere in Italy, I was not yet satisfied. My heart was set on returning to Milan. I longed to

wipe out the memory of my failure there—but that terrible public! I dreaded to appear again before it! I was finally persuaded to make the attempt, and it was arranged for me to sing Ophelia with the celebrated Italian barytone, Battistini.

The audience received me coldly during the first acts. I was in despair.

"If I do not succeed," I said to my mother, as I dressed for the mad scene, "I will throw myself out of the window!"

I went on the stage in a desperate mood, too frantic to care how I looked, pale with grief and rage. I had no make-up on, my dress was in disorder, I must have seemed indeed half mad!

The audience thought it was a studied effect, and I felt a current of interest and sympathy sweep through the theatre. I began singing with a complete abandon, a tragic fervor. The first phrase was greeted enthusiastically! Determined to win a complete triumph, I attacked a cadenza which I had never before attempted in public. It was an extremely difficult piece of vocalisation, going from low A to F above high C. Once up on that dizzy pinnacle, I was like a child on a ladder, afraid to move or come down!

The conductor was terrified. I held the note as long as I could; but when my breath gave out, I had to descend the chromatic scale. I did it with such *brio,* such perfection, that the audience burst into a thunder of applause. Seldom have I had such an ovation! I can truly say that it was the greatest moment in my operatic career. What intense, what triumphant joy filled my young heart that night!

I cannot continue the narrative of my years in Italy without speaking of an artist whose influence upon my career has been incalculable—La Duse! All my life, I have loved and admired her deeply. I cannot see her upon the stage without being profoundly moved. Hers was the spark that set my fires alight. Her art, simple, human, passionately sincere, was a revelation to me. It broke down the false and conventional standards of lyric expression to which I had become accustomed. She taught me to appreciate sincerity in art, a sincerity which in her case went to the length of being unwilling to make up for the stage.

She was severely criticised for this when she first appeared in Paris. She returned another year, with the usual type of costume and make-up, proving

Eleonora Duse

that she could shine in the school that believed in the embellishment of nature, as well as in her own realistic manner. I shall never forget her beauty that year! All Paris flocked to see her, and every one was forced to bow before her genius.

I followed her on her tours through Italy one summer, going from town to town where she was playing, attending each performance, and sometimes watching for her at the stage door or in the lobby of her hotel. I never wished to approach my divinity. I wanted her to remain exalted, remote, inaccessible.

Years later, however, when we were both touring in America, I learned to know her well, and to appreciate deeply her great qualities of mind and heart.

CHAPTER VII

THE HOLY CITY

IN 1891 I was chosen by Mascagni to create the charming rôle of Susel in his opera, "L'Amico Fritz." It was produced at the Costanzi Theatre in Rome with Lucia and Lhérie in the tenor and barytone parts. Lucia I have already mentioned in connection with my début in Naples. Lhérie, an artist of distinction, had been a tenor in his youth. He had created the rôle of Don José in "Carmen." He was very popular in both France and Italy, and I have often sung in "Hamlet" with him. He excelled in the title rôle of this opera, which he interpreted in a truly Shakespearean spirit. We had, all three, marked successes in Mascagni's delightful production, which is indeed a small masterpiece.

During my sojourn in the Holy City, I often went to hear the choir of the Sistine Chapel, which was at that time under the direction of the last of the eunuchs, Mustapha, a Turk, like all his com-

panions. He had an exquisite high tenor voice, truly angelic, neither masculine nor yet feminine in type—deep, subtle, poignant in its vibrant intensity. He sang the classic church music admirably, especially Palestrina. He had certain curious notes which he called his fourth voice—strange, sexless tones, superhuman, uncanny!

I was so much impressed by his talent that I decided to take some lessons from him. The first question I asked was how I might learn to sing those heavenly tones.

"It's quite easy," he answered. "You have only to practice with your mouth tight shut for two hours a day. At the end of ten years, you may possibly be able to do something with them."

That was hardly encouraging!

"A thousand thanks!" I exclaimed. "At that rate, I will never learn! It takes too much patience!"

Nevertheless, with the tenacity which is a fundamental part of my character, I set to work. My first efforts were pitiful. My mother assured me that they sounded like the miauling of a sick cat! At the end of two years, however, I began to make use of my newly acquired skill; but it was not until

the third year of study that I obtained a complete mastery of the difficult art.

These special notes, which I have used since then with great success, are rarely found in the ordinary run of voices. I have tried repeatedly to develop them in my pupils; but, in spite of hard work and close application, I have never found one pupil who has been able to imitate them.

While I was studying in Rome, I overheard one of my comrades remark that, after all, this "fourth voice" was nothing but a trick. Much vexed, I told Mustapha what had been said.

"Let them howl!" he answered. "Our friends call our achievement trickery when they cannot do the same thing themselves. As soon as they have learned the art, they call it talent!"

I have always been an eager student, anxious to acquire new skill, ready to try any method that might increase the effectiveness of my interpretations. When I was young, I would have walked through fire, had I been told that I would sing or act better in consequence. Fortunately for me, fire was never thought of as a method of perfection, but water was suggested.

I was at the studio of Denys Peuch, a sculptor

from my own country of Aveyron. He explained that, in order to obtain graceful lines, he soaked his models' clothes in water before arranging their draperies. The idea struck me as admirable.

The next time I sang Ophelia, I wrung my dress out in a basin of water before putting it on for the mad scene. The effect was all that could be desired until the middle of the act. It is then that the pale Ophelia, surrounded by a group of lovely maidens, sinks to the ground beside the lake. As I lay on the mossy bank, playing with my flowers, I noticed that the little ballet dancers were staring at me, round-eyed.

"Look at Calvé!" I heard one of them whisper. "What's the matter with her? She's on fire! See the smoke!"

What an unexpected disaster! My lovely Grecian effect was drying off in a cloud of steam! We were all convulsed with laughter. The farce ended in a bad cold, and I never tried this particular method again.

During one of my later visits to Rome I carried into effect an idea that had long haunted my imagination. I wished to have a monument designed for my tomb, and I asked Denys Peuch to carry out

From a Statue by Denys Peuch

CALVÉ AS OPHELIA

my idea. This great sculptor was not only my friend and compatriot, but a very talented artist as well. I reproduce here a photograph of the statue he made of me in the rôle of Ophelia, which some day will be used for its destined purpose.

M. Peuch is now director of the Academy of France in Rome, and we of Aveyron are very proud of our distinguished countryman. Our little department can claim many famous men among its citizens, not the least of whom is Henri Fabre, who lived near my own home, and whose marvellous researches in the insect world have brought him world-wide honour.

CHAPTER VIII

A VENETIAN TRIUMPH

CONTINUING my tour through Italy, I went to Venice where I sang at the Théâtre de Fenice, a charming eighteenth-century hall, decorated with a Louis XV fan, the loges panelled in verni Marin. I gave over twenty performances of Ophelia, with tremendous success, for I was the spoiled darling of the public.

One afternoon I went to the theatre rather earlier than usual. As I entered, I saw a group of porters and mechanics hovering around a little sedan chair which stood in the wings and which I had noticed before. It had been built for Patti on her last stay in Venice. She feared the dampness of the canals and insisted on being carried to and from her hotel in this specially constructed *portantina.*

As I made my way toward my dressing room, the stage manager, who had been in animated conversation with the group around the sedan chair, approached me.

"Will Mademoiselle be so kind as to tell me how much she weighs?" he asked.

"A hundred and twenty-five pounds," I answered, much surprised by the question.

"Splendid!" he exclaimed. "Just the thing! Mademoiselle, if she wishes, can use Patti's sedan chair. The porters will not carry more than a certain weight, but Mademoiselle is exactly right."

I was of course delighted. Every evening I made the journey through the narrow alleys of old Venice, and, as my *portantina* was unique, I was known all along the route. The street urchins began cheering as soon as they saw it appear at the end of a street.

"Ecco la prima donna!" they shouted. "Here she comes! *E viva! E viva!"*

My farewell performances at the Fenice was a gala night. The stage was inundated with flowers, the audience wildly enthusiastic. Finally, it was time to go home, and my mother sent my maid to call the porters.

This maid, Valérie, was a Parisian, dark, graceful, and not unlike me in build and colouring. She loved to imitate my way of walking, my gestures, sometimes even my clothes. She wore a mantilla,

and at a distance might easily be mistaken for her mistress.

My mother and I sat waiting in my dressing room for a long time. Valérie seemed to be unaccountably slow. We were beginning to wonder what had happened to her, when she burst into the room.

"Oh, mademoiselle! Forgive me!" she exclaimed, all out of breath. "I didn't do it on purpose! They carried me off in the *portantina!* There were serenaders—gentlemen in evening clothes! It was grand. A regular triumph! They thought it was mademoiselle!"

She stopped for breath; but before we could ask a single question, she was off again.

"When we got to the hotel," she continued excitedly, "the manager opened the door with a deep bow. When he saw me, how he jumped! 'It's nothing but the maid!' he shouted in a rage. But really it isn't my fault!" Valérie concluded plaintively. "I can't help it if I look like Mademoiselle! The porters brought me back, but the celebration is all over. Every one is gone!"

My mother was very angry and wanted to dismiss the girl on the spot. I could only laugh. It

seemed to me so absurd! When we got back to the hotel, no one was in sight, but the steps were covered with flowers, strewn at the feet of my chambermaid!

In my own room at last, I could not sleep. I stood on my balcony, looking out over the peaceful lagoon. It was a marvellous night! Venice was still a city of gondolas and midnight serenades. There were no motor boats to spoil the picture, as there are to-day. My mother was thrilled with joy at my successes.

"Never, never have you had such a triumph!" she exclaimed, again and again. She had forgiven Valérie her escapade and only remembered the flowers, the applause, the tributes of appreciation and enthusiasm.

Before we left the hotel the next day, we were presented with a bill.

"For carrying off in the *portantina*—200 francs."

My mother, greatly incensed and surprised, called the manager.

"What does this mean?" she demanded.

The unhappy man was overcome with embarrassment.

"Patti's manager used to arrange for a triumphal

progress of this sort," he explained. "He hired the hallboys and musicians from the hotel. I thought Mademoiselle, too, would like it. I am sorry, if you are displeased."

"It's really too much," wailed my mother, "to have to pay such a price for the glorification of a maid!"

In after years, I was telling this tale to one of my comrades, who had also sung with success in Venice.

"Oh, Calvé! What a blow!" she exclaimed when I had finished my story. "You have shattered one of my most precious illusions! My poor father must have had to foot the bill, while I thought that I had been acclaimed by the flower of Venetian nobility!"

CHAPTER IX

DARK HOURS

VENICE, that city of delight, the joy of poets and the home of beauty, holds for me other memories than those of the gay days of my triumphs there. For me it is darkened by the shadow of a great sorrow, the memory of a day when my soul touched the black depths of passion and despair, and yet was saved.

I was alone. For a whole week I had been awaiting, in an anguish of pain and suspense, the arrival of a certain letter. It came at last, brutal, crushing, final, announcing an overwhelming catastrophe, the end of happiness, the death of hope.

A terrible despair seized me. I wished to die. Leaning from my balcony, I looked into the black water below, longing for the peace, the forgetting that one movement, one single effort, would bring me. Cut off from the world around me, dumb and blinded by my pain, I bent to the black abyss. But my musician's ear was not yet dulled. A sound penetrated the wall of my despair. I heard the

voice of a gondolier singing as he swung his oars.

Ah! To sing! To sing once more before I died! To cry my anguish to the night before the eternal silence should engulf me!

Like one distraught, I threw my cloak about me and went out into the night. A barque lay at the foot of the stone stairway outside my door. I found myself seated in it, floating along the still canal, between the dark water and the darker sky. I began to sing, madly, passionately, all the songs I had ever known. Gay or sad, tender or tragic, they poured from my lips in a turbulent flood. I sang as though I would never sing again, spending my strength, my grief, my life; giving to the unresponding shadows all that I had of beauty and of art.

Only when my voice died in my throat, and my parched lips could make no further sound, did I realise my strange situation. As one who painfully returns to reality from the uncharted seas of fever and delirium, I looked about. I saw where I was, and became conscious of what I had been doing.

All around me a moving mass of small boats pushed and jostled. They had gathered from every

side like spectre ships filled with whispering, wondering people. In a barque that almost touched my own, I could see a young couple, closely embraced, watching me with a startled, ardent gaze. How long had my voice been leading this phantom procession through the night?

I shrank back under the hood of my gondola, my one desire to hide from these people I had so strangely evoked! I gave my gondolier the address of a friend whom I knew to be absent and in whose empty palazzo I could take sanctuary. Many hours later, when I thought the way was open, I left my place of refuge. As I stepped into the waiting gondola, a black shadow slipped out from the protection of the building opposite and followed me to my hotel. The lovers on the lagoon had not given up the vigil, and had waited to discover my real abiding place!

The next morning a bouquet of flowers was brought to me with this message:

"From Paul and Jeanne, who love each other greatly and to whom you have given an unforgettable night! May the blessing of God be upon you, you who are the bearer of the Fire Divine."

These last words touched me to my inmost fibre.

They wakened my soul! I could pray at last, and I thanked God that I was still alive!

My voice had saved me.

Nor have I ever forgotten that night. Every year on the same day, in any corner of the world where I may be, I receive a line from Paul and Jeanne with its inspiring message of love and gratitude.

CHAPTER X

"CAVALLERIA" AND "CARMEN" IN PARIS

AFTER my successes in Italy, I was eager to return to Paris. When Carvalho engaged me to create "Cavalleria Rusticana" at the Opéra Comique, I went back to the scene of my early endeavours, filled with ambition and enthusiasm. Yet in spite of the experience that my years in Italy had brought me, I felt myself out of place in this conventional theatre, where tradition and established customs were blindly venerated.

My interpretation of the rôle of Santuzza astonished my comrades. My spontaneous and apparently unstudied gestures shocked them. Even the costume which I had brought with me from Italy, the clothes of a real peasant woman, coarse shirt, worn sandals and all, was considered eccentric and ugly. I was unmercifully criticised and ridiculed. At the dress rehearsal, I heard one of the older singers pass judgment upon me.

"What a pity!" he exclaimed. "She has a lovely voice, and she has really made astonishing progress.

But such acting! In this part of the world we do not bang on the table with our fists when we are singing. At the rate she is going, she will be ruined!"

The speaker was a man for whom I had the greatest respect and admiration. His remark disturbed me profoundly. I was on the point of changing my whole manner, which was apparently too realistic for the taste of the moment. The night of the first performance, however, as I was about to make my entrance, courage returned to me.

"Come what will," I thought, "I shall act the part as I feel it."

I went on the stage, and I was, as I had been before, the naïve and tragic Santuzza, the passionate, impulsive peasant girl of Italy.

It was a triumph!

Shortly afterward, I created "Carmen."

If I was criticised out of all measure before these two successes, after them I was praised with equal lack of restraint! Everything I now did was right. Unfortunately for me, no one dared utter a word of criticism; and in consequence, I was carried away by my passion for realism. It became an obsession, and occasionally I overstepped the mark.

Later, however, I learned wisdom and moderation.

In developing the rôle of Carmen, I used the same sincerity, the same courage and disregard of tradition, that I had in my interpretation of "Cavalleria." I insisted on wearing the fringed shawl which is called in Spain the "manton di Manilla" instead of the bolero and short skirt in which the part had always been costumed.

In the matter of the dance, also, my ideas and those of the directors did not agree! They wanted me to learn the steps which had been danced with such grace and charm by Galli-Marié, the original creator of the rôle.

"How do you expect me to imitate Galli?" I protested. "She was small, dainty, an entirely different build. I am big. I have long arms. It is absurd for me to imitate any one but the gypsies themselves!"

Whereupon, I showed them the true dance of the *gitanas,* with its special use of arms and hands—a manner of dancing for which the Spaniards have invented the expression "el brazear."

I had been to Grenada and I had visited the district of the Albaycin, where the gypsy bands lived in mysterious caves and grottos. I had watched

them in their daily life. I had seen them dance and sing, and had studied their gestures and movements. I had learned how the women dressed, and had bought from them the very shawls they were wearing. Nor had I entirely forgotten my youthful contact with these strange and fascinating people. I came, therefore, to the study and interpretation of this rôle with a thorough knowledge of the subject, and I was able to develop my ideas in spite of criticism and discouragement.

It is unnecessary for me to speak of the success of Carmen. I have sung this rôle all over the world, and it has brought me whatever fame I may have. It is one of the most interesting, and perhaps the most popular creation of my long operatic career.

I was now greatly in demand. Following closely upon the launching of "Carmen," I obtained excellent engagements in London and New York. My popularity was assured. But my greatest reward was the appreciation and praise of the generous and warm-hearted Galli-Marié.

"Bravo! Calvé!" she said to me one day, after the performance. "You are most interesting and original. This is the first time I have consented to at-

Calvé as Saffhio

Galli-Marié, Creator of Carmen

tend a performance of this opera which reminds me so poignantly, so vividly, of my own youth."

I heard from her again, years later, at the time of the festivities in connection with the thousandth performance of "Carmen." I was asked to sing the rôle at the Opéra Comique. On the day in question, I received a telegram from Galli, saying:

"My heart and my thoughts are with you tonight."

I have often been asked whether Carmen is my favourite rôle. Indeed, it is not! I adore Bizet's music, but the character is, on the whole, antipathetic to me. Yet I have been a prisoner to that opera. It is apparently eternally popular, particularly with the American public. My impresarios, who were, above all things, keen business men, forced me to sing it much more often than any other rôle of my repertoire.

Carmen has only two redeeming qualities. She is truthful, and she is brave. Even in the face of death, she will admit that she no longer loves! Marguerite, Ophelia, Juliet, Elsa, Santuzza, have been my favourite parts.

I have had the privilege of creating two rôles written especially for me by our great composer,

Massenet. "La Navarraise" was produced at Covent Garden in London in 1897; "Sappho," a year later. I have sung both these operas frequently. The first is short, a passionate dramatic tragedy in one act. The second, taken from Alphonse Daudet's novel of the same name, has been one of my most successful creations. Massenet wrote it for the special and individual notes in my voice, those unusual tones of which I have already spoken.

Massenet was a very popular figure in his day. His witticisms were widely quoted, his epigrams passed from mouth to mouth. He was agreeable, entertaining, a charming individual and a thorough Frenchman.

At the last general rehearsal before the first night of "Sappho," I had the misfortune of arriving at the theatre ten minutes late. The company was waiting, and Massenet, excited and nervous as usual, was decidedly out of patience. He greeted me abruptly, disregarding the presence of my comrades and the members of the chorus and orchestra.

"Mademoiselle Calvé," he said, "an artist worthy of the name would never keep her fellow workers waiting!"

I was extremely angry. Turning away, I walked

off the stage and started to leave the building. On my way out, I had a change of heart. It took all my courage, but I decided to go back!

"My friends," I said, "the master is right. I am at fault. Forgive me! I am ready to rehearse my part, if I am permitted to do so."

The chorus and the orchestra applauded. Massenet embraced me. I was forgiven, but it had been a painful lesson. Since then, I have never been a minute late for even the most unimportant engagement.

"Sappho," as I have said, was taken from Alphonse Daudet's book. I knew the distinguished writer, and used to visit him in his charming house at Champrosay. He received me in his study, his sensitive face always beautiful and calm, in spite of his suffering. His wife and children were with him, devoted to his care, surrounding him with affectionate attentions.

We were talking of "Sappho" one day and discussing the presentation of the character on the stage.

"Remember the phrase of Baudelaire," Daudet admonished me. "Beware of movements which break the line! Few gestures, I beg of you! Be

restrained, calm, classic. She is called Sappho in the play because she posed for the statue of the Greek poetess."

I always remembered this advice and strove to carry it out in my interpretation of the rôle.

We used to talk often of Aveyron, my own beloved country. I sang the songs of the mountaineers and shepherds, songs without accompaniment, which I had learned in my childhood.

"You evoke all your race in your singing," he said to me one day. "Your mountains and your wide, high plains live again in the sound of your voice, pure and luminous like golden honey!"

Massenet Dedication
à la 1ère page de l'Opéra
à Emma Calvé.

de Sapho –

Toutes ces pages je les ai écrites avec votre constante pensée – elles doivent vivre par vous — elles vous appartiennent doublement et je vous les offre avec l'expression de ma reconnaissance infinie.

Ma chère femme et moi nous vous admirons
nous vous aimons
nous vous remercions !

Massenet

paris, Samedi 27 novembre 1897.
1ère représentation.
(théâtre de l'Opéra Comique)

(*Translation*)

I have written these pages with the thought of you constantly before me—through you they must live—they belong to you doubly and I offer them to you with an *infinite* gratitude.

My dear wife and I, admire,
love,
and thank you.

MASSENET

Paris, Saturday, 27th of November, 1897.
1st performance
(Theatre de l'Opéra Comique).

CHAPTER XI

THE COURT AT WINDSOR

I SANG every season for many years at Covent Garden in London, appearing there in all the operas of my repertoire. I also created several rôles at this theatre, notably "La Navarraise" by Massenet, in 1894, and "Amy Robsart," the first production of its author, de Lara, whose "Messaline" I sang some years later.

Each year, during my engagement in England, I was summoned to Windsor Castle to sing for Queen Victoria. I shall never forget my first audience. We had been waiting in the reception hall for some time, when the Queen entered, leaning on the shoulder of a young Maharaja of India. What an extraordinary picture they made; he, a slender youth, handsome, exotic, his turban surmounted by a flashing spray of diamonds, his canary-coloured tunic covered with precious stones; the Queen, in black, as usual, the severity of her widow's weeds hardly lightened by the little white tulle cap which

she wore during her last years. Yet it was the Queen who held every eye! She was impressive, dominating, a real presence, in spite of her short stature and her plain exterior. Her blue eyes, which could shine with such tender affection for her adored grandchildren, flashed, stern and imperious to the world at large.

The Queen spoke excellent French, and was even familiar with Provençal, the language of the South of France. She had read Mistral's poems in that dialect and could recite many of them from memory. She was interested in the folksongs of old France, and used to ask me to sing them for her. How gay and full of charm she was in her moments of relaxation! She used to call me a child of nature and laugh at my inability to remember the rules of etiquette.

One day she sent for me, to congratulate me after one of my concerts. I was very much moved by what she said, and in my confusion I answered, "Yes, Princess," to one of her questions. She laughed, delighted.

"You make me feel young again!" she exclaimed.

As I was leaving her presence, walking backward, as custom demands, I stumbled on my dress.

Forgetting everything, I turned quickly and picked up my train. Then I realised, by the expression on the faces of those around me, what a break I had made. I had turned my back on the Queen! She, however, was only amused.

"Go on! Go on!" she said, covering my embarrassment with a laugh. "You are charming from the back, as from every other point of view!"

During my visits to Windsor Castle, I saw many interesting personages; the ill-fated Czar of Russia and his young wife, the Crown Prince and his fiancée, the King of Bavaria, the Kings of Sweden and Greece, the Empress Eugénie, and many others.

Eugénie was a frequent visitor at Windsor, where Queen Victoria, who had a warm affection for her, always welcomed her most cordially. I had been told by her cousin, Count Primoli, that the ex-empress treasured very greatly anything that related to her son, the unfortunate Prince Imperial, whose early and tragic death was so crushing a blow to his adoring mother. One day I presented to the Empress a small package which I had brought with me from France. In a few words, I explained the impulse that had led me to take a bit

of earth from the place that had once been the orange grove of the Palace of the Tuilleries.

"They tell me that the Prince Imperial used to play in this garden as a child," I said. "Perhaps this earth still holds the memory of his footsteps."

I had not realised how much my gift would move her. Pale with emotion, she took the little bundle in her hands and left the room hurriedly. It was as though this handful of dry dirt were some holy relic that she must gaze upon alone and undisturbed.

The present Queen of Spain was then at Court, a little girl who was occasionally permitted by her grandmother to attend the theatrical performances given at Windsor. She was present one evening when I sang Santuzza in "Cavalleria." In one of the scenes, the tenor had to throw me violently to the floor. The sensitive child burst into tears.

"I don't want him to hurt the lady!" she wailed, in such a loud voice that every one turned and looked at her. As I came off the stage, I heard the future Queen being thoroughly scolded by her governess.

"A princess must never cry in public!" she said sternly. "Your people are watching you. Pull yourself together! Be worthy of your position!"

The poor little girl, who could not have been more than six years old at the time, drew herself up. She swallowed her tears and walked, sedate and dignified, through the lines of obsequious attendants. Once out of sight, however, I heard the sobs break out anew. Nature had triumphed! I could not help pitying this royal child, as I compared her to the children of the people, who have at least the liberty of letting their tears flow unrestrained.

I have, among my treasures, a charming little picture of Queen Victoria, taken from a portrait made of her when she was about five years old. She gave it to me one day at Windsor in a frame carrying her device and crest. A London newspaper had published, a little while before, my own picture made at that tender age. It had apparently greatly amused Her Majesty, for she spoke of it immediately on my next visit to the Court, at the same time giving me the delightful picture of herself, which I reproduce here.

The first time I sang at Windsor Castle a most absurd incident occurred. I was sitting in the suite of rooms which had been set aside for me, waiting to be conducted to the concert hall. It was after

eight o'clock, and I was supposed to sing at nine.

Becoming impatient, I rang the bell. No one answered. I told my maid, who was with me, to go in search of some one. She went to the door. It was locked.

"Mon Dieu," she cried, "we are prisoners!"

There was no telephone in those days, and we could not make ourselves heard. We finally gave up the attempt, and I settled down philosophically to write some letters. My maid, who appreciated the opportunity of using note-paper with the Windsor crest on it, did likewise. This girl, by the way, must have laid in a large supply of writing paper, for I used to receive letters from her years after she had left my service, written under the royal letterhead.

We were finally released from our confinement by an agitated lady-in-waiting, who explained that the sudden death of the maître d'hôtel had thrown the whole household into confusion. No one had realised my plight until I failed to appear on the stage.

One of the admirable and endearing qualities of Queen Victoria was her kindness and consideration for those whom she honoured with her favour. I

Queen Victoria at Five

remember on one occasion being taken ill before a concert at Windsor Castle. I could not keep my engagement, and it was suggested that some one be sent to take my place. The Queen would not hear of it.

"No, indeed!" she said. "It would pain our friend, Calvé. We will wait until she has entirely recovered."

I had the pleasure of seeing the Queen not only in the formal splendour of Windsor Castle, but in her highland home at Balmoral, as well. There I was given an opportunity of judging how popular and well beloved a sovereign she was among her people. The whole countryside assembled one day on the terrace of the castle. All the farmers of the neighbourhood were there, with their wives, their children and their grandchildren. The Queen walked among them, gracious and kindly. She seemed to know every one by name, talking to them with the greatest interest, making all sorts of inquiries as to their welfare. Later in the day a banquet was served on the lawn, under the trees—a charming scene of rustic hospitality.

As a result of my many visits to Windsor and Balmoral, I came into contact with various mem-

bers of the royal family. One of the daughters of Queen Victoria was particularly witty and amusing. I remember hearing her discuss a certain actress of the Comédie Française, who was playing the part of a society woman in a modern comedy. The only criticism that could be made of this talented actress was that she played the part overconscientiously. She was excessively distinguished, impeccably perfect.

"What does your Highness think of Mlle. —— in this part?" some one asked the princess.

"Oh, I am no judge!" she answered. "I do not always understand her. She is too much of a great lady for me!"

The royal princesses have continued their kindness to me since the death of Queen Victoria. They receive me most cordially whenever I go to London, and I had the pleasure of being presented to the Queen of Spain only a short time ago. She remembered vividly the incident of her childhood, and we laughed again over her anxiety for my safety, her tears, and the scolding she received in consequence.

One day during Queen Victoria's lifetime, I

received the following letter from her cousin, the Countess Théodora de Gleiken:

"Madam: Her Majesty has commanded me to make a portrait bust of you in the rôle of Santuzza in 'Cavalleria Rusticana.' Will you do me the very great honour of coming to my studio to pose, or would you prefer that I should come to you?"

I am therefore enshrined in marble at Windsor Castle, in the company of princes and princesses, of generals and kings!

"What are you thinking of, as you pose?" the countess asked me, one day. "How do you manage to hold so dramatic, so intense, an expression?"

"I am trying to personify human jealousy," I answered, "and so I sing to myself 'He loved me once, I love him still!' "

The sculptress wrote these words across the base of the bust, and I have often thought, should that marble be lost and then found again after many hundred years, what a mystery it would create! Antiquarians would shake their heads and marvel.

"Who is this unfortunate princess dressed in peasant's clothes?" they would ask. "What is her history? What her secret sorrow?"

It would be a nine days' wonder!

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY ONTARIO

The bust is not yet lost, however, for only a few years ago I asked the Princess Beatrice what had become of it, supposing that since Queen Victoria's death it had been relegated to some attic storeroom.

"Not at all!" the princess assured me. "We have gathered together all our mother's favourite possessions, portraits, statues, mementos of all kinds, and placed them in a room known as the Victoria Room. There they will remain as long as the castle stands."

My memories of England are not all of royal gatherings and pleasant places. I witnessed there one of the most pitiful scenes that I have ever beheld. It was at the house of Lady de Gray, one evening during a brilliant London season. Oscar Wilde came into the drawing room where Lady de Gray was receiving. He approached our hostess and begged her to allow him to present a friend whom he had taken the liberty of bringing with him.

"He is very poor," Wilde explained, "and very unhappy. He is a distinguished French poet, a man of genius, but just now in great trouble."

Our hostess, whose kind heart and generous hand

were ever at the service of the unfortunate, immediately acquiesced. Wilde left the room and returned in a moment, bringing with him—Paul Verlaine! Their entrance was spectacular. Oscar Wilde was at the height of his glory, brilliant, dashing, bejewelled, a veritable Beau Brummell. With his extraordinary clothes, his tall figure and buoyant carriage, he dominated the ill-clothed, shrinking figure beside him.

Wilde was rejoicing in his recent theatrical triumphs. Verlaine was just out of prison. I shall never forget the poor poet's eyes that night, eyes of a lost child, naïve, bewildered, infinitely pathetic! They haunt me to this day!

At Wilde's urgent request, Verlaine consented reluctantly to recite a recent poem, "D'un Prison," which he had written while he was in prison. His voice, as he spoke the heart-breaking lines, was so poignant, so tragic, that every one in the room was moved to tears. I have never been able to sing that song, set to music by Reynaldo Hahn, without a reminiscent shudder.

Several years later I was at the theatre in Paris. I noticed a man sitting some distance from me. He was badly dressed, his shoulders hunched, his

whole appearance shabby, furtive. There was something vaguely familiar about him, but I did not recognise him until he turned his head.

It was Oscar Wilde! Oscar Wilde, in the same forlorn state as his friend Verlaine, just out of prison himself, all his splendour gone, a miserable wreck, trying to hide his shame in the indifferent crowd.

I went toward him, greeting him with outstretched hands. He started at the sound of my voice and turned toward me. Terrible! I saw again the pitiful child's eyes of poor Verlaine. For a second, he shrank from me, as though the memories that I brought were more than he could bear. Then, with an exclamation of grief and despair, he grasped my hands, murmuring in broken accents:

"Oh, Calvé! Calvé!"

CHAPTER XII

METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE, NEW YORK

I MADE my début at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, on November 29, 1893, in the rôle of Santuzza in "Cavalleria Rusticana." The American public did not care very much for the opera at that time. It was severely criticised in the newspapers, but I myself had a great success.

The next morning, the directors sent for me. They wished to change the bill immediately, and asked me to sing "Carmen," not in French, as I had always sung it, but in Italian. I refused! The effect of my French dictation would be lost, and the whole opera would be thrown out of focus. It was an impossible demand. One of the directors was particularly insistent, and not entirely courteous.

"You have no choice in the matter!" he said curtly. " 'Cavalleria' has not been the success we expected. We must make a change immediately, and there is nothing more to be said."

I was in despair. I could not make the directors

realise what I myself saw so clearly, that this work of art, conceived in the mind of a Frenchman, Prosper Mérimée, put to music by a French composer, must be sung by me, a Frenchwoman, in French. In no other way could it be given its full value, its true flavour and quality. It seemed to me both inartistic and impracticable to attempt anything else. If the directors wished to replace "Cavalleria" with a success, they would not achieve their object by putting on an ineffective "Carmen."

In my agitation and helplessness, I appealed to the elder Coquelin, who was acting in New York at the moment. I told him my troubles. He sympathised entirely with my point of view, and with his usual kindness went to the directors himself and used his influence to persuade them to give up the idea. They told him that they had no French tenor to sing the rôle of Don José, and that, therefore, I would have to sing in Italian! Undaunted by this rebuff, he determined to succeed where they had failed. He would find a tenor. He went to Jean de Reszke, and laid the case before him. Although it was not in de Reszke's repertoire, he promised Coquelin that he would singe the rôle.

What a triumphant success was that production

Calvé as Carmen

of "Carmen"! From then on, it was the drawing card at the Metropolitan. We gave it again and again, to packed houses. The box receipts were astounding! In the succeeding seasons, its popularity never waned. There was no further question as to how it should be sung.

What unforgettable casts, what glorious evenings! Jean de Reszke, Melba, Plançon, and myself! The public was wildly enthusiastic. After each performance, we would be recalled a thousand times. It was said that "Carmen" became epidemic, a joyful contagion!

In spite of my manager's enthusiasm for Bizet's opera, I sang all the other rôles of my repertoire in New York, including Marguerite in "Faust," Ophelia in "Hamlet," the Marguerite of Boïto's "Mefistofele," Massenet's "La Navarraise," and the "Messaline" of de Lara.

For more than twelve years the Metropolitan was a fabulous opera house. Never have so many artists of exceptional talent been gathered together under one management. It was due largely to the genius of Maurice Grau, who was one of the most intelligent as well as one of the ablest impresarios I have ever known. He was more than a capable

business man. He was an artist and an enthusiast as well. If he considered an opera above the average, a true work of art, he would produce it without regard to its money-making possibilities. He was interested, first and foremost, in achieving artistic success. That practical and financial success should follow was not distasteful to him, but at least it did not blind him to other issues!

He was always a thoughtful and considerate manager in his relations with his artists. I shall never forget his kindness to me at the time of my father's death. I was singing Carmen when I received the unexpected and crushing news, and I was in constant demand at the opera house. At this time "Carmen" was exceptionally popular. It was not a convenient moment for me to be given a leave of absence, but Mr. Grau understood my distress.

"My poor friend," he said, "I shall, as you know, lose money by your absence, but you must take your time. I leave you entirely free. Come back when you feel that you are able to sing again!"

His kindness was surpassed only by his remarkable skill and ability as a manager. He grouped around him a brilliant company of singers, each dis-

tinguished in his own line, every one a musician and an artist.

Victor Maurel

Foremost among them was Victor Maurel, the great tragedian, a man of genius, whose Falstaff and Iago, not to mention his many other brilliant creations, stand alone. His name will remain forever linked with that of Verdi. I have never seen any one with a more noble presence, a greater dignity of gesture and carriage, on the stage. His dramatic gift was so extraordinary that it dominated the minds of those who saw him, and almost made them forget his voice, which was, nevertheless, of an unusual quality, full of colour and exceptionally expressive.

The rôle in which, to my mind, his qualities as a singer showed to best advantage was that of Mozart's "Don Giovanni." I can still hear the inimitable manner in which he sang the famous serenade, "Deh, vieni alla fenestra" (Appear, love, at the window). His performance was a marvel of lightness and grace. His diction was always exquisite and enchanting.

And his Falstaff! With what elegant fatuity he rendered the air "Quand'eri paggio del Duca di

Norfolk!" (When I was page to the Duke of Norfolk!) It was a masterpiece, complete and perfect.

He was, as I have said before, my teacher and master in the art of lyric declamation. I was fortunate in making my début with him in "Aben Hamet" at the Théâtre des Italiens, of which he was at the time director. I was then very inexperienced, and he had an important and constructive influence on my career. I have an abiding gratitude and admiration for him.

I am fortunate in being able to reproduce here a most interesting portrait of Maurel as Iago. It is taken from a painting by Benjamin Constant and shows Maurel in one of his most interesting and important characterizations.

How many other artists of the very first order there were in this remarkable company!

Jean de Reszke, the unforgettable, master of the art of singing, whose style and finish have never been equalled. He was the Romeo of one's dreams, the ideal Lohengrin, the perfect Siegfried.

Edouard de Reszke, of the glorious voice, was his brother. Both admirable singers, they were an unusual pair, each the complement of the other.

Marcella Sembrich, marvellous singer, impecca-

From the painting by Benjamin Constant

CHARACTER PORTRAIT OF VICTOR MAUREL

ble vocalist in the art of *bel canto,* has left in the memory of all those who had the privilege of hearing her an impression of perfect execution in all the coloratura rôles which she so admirably interpreted.

Melba, whose pure voice soared like a skylark, "intimate of heaven."

Lilli Lehmann, that noble singer, whose authoritative style, scientific knowledge and perfection both in singing and in acting aroused the admiration of artists and public alike.

Emma Eames, whose voice and talent equalled her great beauty.

Madame Nordica, admirable interpreter of Wagner, whose sudden death in Australia was so great a blow to all her friends.

Milka Ternina, highly intellectual—a Kundry beyond compare.

Madame Clementine de Vere, accomplished musician, whose lovely voice had an unusual range. She was an accomplished musician and possessed a very large operatic repertoire.

Madame Schumann-Heink, who, after a long and successful operatic career, has continued to delight the American public from the concert stage.

Salignac of the fiery temperament, talented singer and actor who, after his engagement in New York, became one of the leading figures on the stage of the Opéra Comique in Paris, where he created a number of extremely interesting rôles.

Plançon, the admirable bass, exponent of the pure French school in art and diction, with whom I sang for many years both in the United States and in England.

And poor Castelmary, my old friend and comrade, who died so tragically on the stage while singing Sir Tristan in von Flotow's "Martha." I was in the audience that night. As soon as he came on the stage, I noticed that he looked tired and ill. In the second scene, where he is surrounded by the village maidens, who are supposed to prevent his pursuit of Martha, I saw him stagger and throw his arms in the air.

"I am choking!" he cried.

The chorus, thinking this an impromptu piece of acting, crowded around him even more closely, laughing, teasing, pulling him about, smothering him with their embraces. He struggled frantically for one or two minutes, and then fell to the floor with a crash.

Every one rushed behind the scenes, but it was too late. He was dead. Nothing could be done for him. I tried to wipe the make-up from those cold cheeks! It was difficult, impossible! I put a crucifix between his hands, and they carried him away as he was, in his comedian's costume.

Speaking of my comrades at the Metropolitan reminds me of a tenor with whom I appeared for a single performance only—a most extraordinary experience!

The bill that evening was "Cavalleria Rusticana," with Salignac as Turiddu. When I arrived at the theatre, I heard that my partner was ill. Much perturbed, I inquired who was to take his place.

"It is quite all right!" I was assured. "An excellent substitute has been found. A very fine singer, well known in New York. Go ahead with the performance!"

After my aria in the first act, the tenor enters. Imagine my stupefaction, when I saw before me a hunchback! A hunchback, of whom I was supposed to be passionately enamoured, desperately jealous! It was grotesque! I heard some one in the audience snicker. I was furious!

I turned to leave the stage, indifferent to the

scandal it might create, when I was arrested by the expression on the face of the unfortunate man. Timid, fearful, ashamed, the mute appeal in his eyes touched my heart. Pity overcame my anger. I took up my cue, and went on with the scene.

Fortunately, an inspiration came to my rescue. I made the poor man sit down. He looked like a dwarf, when standing, but seated, he seemed taller. I threw myself on my knees before him, and with my arms about him I sang the passionate love song of Santuzza. It was a difficult, one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do; but in order to save the situation, I sang with such sincerity, such conviction, and he, poor creature, with so much good will, that we made a tremendous hit. Between each curtain, he would wring my hands, tears of gratitude streaming from his eyes.

"Thank you! Thank you!" was all he could say, over and over again.

As I look back upon those years at the Metropolitan, they are illuminated by a radiance, a glamour of their own. It was due in no small measure to the enthusiasm and cordiality of that great American public, which welcomed us with open arms, and filled the huge auditorium with respon-

sive and delighted crowds. The critics and the people joined in greeting us, year after year, not without discrimination, but with a heart-warming appreciation that made us happy to return to that great land.

This does not mean that we were never criticised. No, indeed! Each one of us, and the troupe as a whole, received occasionally a thorough rating from the press. I remember that at one time a violent discussion was in progress with reference to the salaries paid the stars of the Metropolitan.

"These European song birds," the papers said, "go beyond the limit. They come over here and demand the most enormous sums. They make all their money here, and they fly home with it. It is outrageous! It ought to be stopped!"

An enterprising reporter interviewed Duse on this subject. She answered him with her usual wisdom and grace.

"You are astonished," she said, "that these great opera singers should be able to command such high salaries. Have you ever considered the heritage that goes to the making of so marvellous and delicate an instrument as Melba and Calvé possess? Do you realise how many generations of clean and

simple living flower in those pure voices? Calvé once told me of a remark that her father made one day after hearing her sing. It is so appropriate and so true that it needs no further comment.

" 'Ah, my daughter,' he said. 'It is easy to see that your forebears have economised for you. Through the long ages they have sat mutely by their firesides, spinning and weaving through the quiet hours. Your song is made of their silences.' "

Our seasons with Maurice Grau were not all spent quietly in New York. Part of the time we travelled through the United States and sang in all the important cities in the country. After these long tours and the hard work of the winter months, we turned our faces toward Europe. But for myself and certain other members of the troupe, the year's work was not yet done. We were engaged in England to sing at Covent Garden. The season in London is later than in New York; and so, in spite of the fatigues of my American engagements, I appeared there during six or eight weeks in all my different rôles.

By the time the London season was over, I was more than ready to take refuge in the quiet country of my birth, and to play at being shepherdess or

milkmaid on my farm in Aveyron. But after my months of rest, I was again prepared to return to work, work which is, in spite of all its trials and difficulties, the breath of an artist's life.

Year after year, I returned to America for the winter months. I did not leave the boards of the Metropolitan for many years. In 1906 I sang for one season at the Manhattan Opera House, and after that I went on extensive concert tours, visiting all the important cities of the United States and Canada, welcomed everywhere with a joyful cordiality by a public which is the most eclectic, the most enthusiastic, that I have ever known.

CHAPTER XIII

EN ROUTE THROUGH THE UNITED STATES

THE troupe of the Metropolitan Opera House, under Maurice Grau's management, used to go all the way to California every year. We travelled in a private train, on the outside of which was written in letters a yard high:

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE
OF NEW YORK

We were a travelling circus! Some of us objected to this blatant labelling of our cars, but Mr. Grau was adamant.

"It's an excellent advertisement!" was his answer to our mild protests. There was nothing for us to do but to accept the situation as gracefully as possible.

We were a source of infinite amusement and entertainment to the inhabitants of the regions through which we passed. The people of the little

villages on our route would wait at the stations for hours, just to see our train go by. They would crowd around the cars when the train stopped, and gape at us through the windows as though we were a collection of strange animals.

"There's Melba!" some one would shout.

"Look at de Reszke!"

"That tall one is Plançon!"

"Come here, quick!" some one else would call. "It's Calvé at this end!"

It was a ludicrous performance!

One day, when we were crossing Texas, we stopped at a small town, since grown into the important city of Houston. A crowd of cowboys had collected from all parts of the state, and were at the station when we arrived. There must have been over three hundred of them, fine, strapping fellows, who greeted us with whoops and cries, in true western style.

"You must sing for these boys," Mr. Grau said to us. "Many of them are young Englishmen, younger sons of good families, who have not been home for years. It would give them so much pleasure to hear you."

We went out on the back platform of the train,

and Melba sang "Home, Sweet Home" for them. Her lovely nightingale tones, clear and exquisite in the still air, reached every heart. The roughest among them was softened, touched to the quick, by the tender, sentimental strains of the old ballad. Before it was over, many were in tears, crying like children, with their heads on each other's shoulders. We were all greatly moved.

"Now, Calvé," Mr. Grau said, turning to me, "it's your turn. You must make them laugh!"

So I sang a dashing Spanish air, with its dance gestures and gay grimaces. They were a responsive audience! The train pulled out of the station through a shouting, yelling mob, hats in air, whips cracking, a tornado of sound and movement! Some of those on the outskirts of the crowd leaped on their horses and raced along beside the train, as fast as their poor beasts could go. The last we saw of them was a thick cloud of dust beside the railroad track in our wake.

We went through Utah, the country of the Mormons. On the outlying farms and in the lonely regions, there were still families which followed the teachings of Brigham Young and practiced plural

marriages. I visited a home where there were three wives and many children. Two of the wives received us surrounded by five or six lovely babies. I picked up the prettiest of them, and turned to the younger of the two women.

"What a beautiful baby!" I exclaimed. "Is it your child?"

She answered me with the quiet dignity of a woman of the Old Testament.

"We are the mothers," she said, including her companion in a noble gesture.

We gave opera in several cities in California. I remember in one of the smaller towns I had an amusing experience. I was expecting a letter by registered mail, and called at the post office to find out if it had arrived.

"Yes," the clerk answered. "There is a letter for Calvé, but I cannot give it to you unless you have some papers to identify you."

"Oh, please!" I begged in the best English I could muster. "Don't make me come back again! It's my letter, I assure you. I am Calvé."

"You Calvé!" he exclaimed incredulously. "Come off! I heard her three days ago in 'Carmen.' You don't look the least bit like her!"

He turned away scornfully, adding in an undertone to the man beside him:

"Calvé's much prettier than this one!"

"I am delighted that I appear to be more beautiful than I am," I answered, having overheard the whispered remark. "I will sing the 'Habañera' for you, and I hope my voice at least will seem as good nearby as it does at a distance!"

Whereupon I threw back my head and launched into "L'amour est enfant de Bohème," to the astonishment of the whole post office. My friend, the clerk, was speechless. He pushed the letter toward me without another word. Evidently my identity was established!

We came back from the coast by way of St. Louis, Chicago and Pittsburgh, singing, acting, travelling by day and night—busy and exhausting trips. By the time we approached the Atlantic coast again, we were thoroughly tired out. I remember one night in Pittsburgh we were all feeling particular weary. Salignac, with whom I was to sing that night, came to me before the performance.

"I hope, Calvé," he said, "that we can take things a little quietly to-night. I am at the end of my rope, and you, too, are tired out. You know what

it's like, once we get on the stage. Our devilish temperaments get away with us, and we throw ourselves into our parts as though our lives depended on it. I warn you now that for this one evening it will be a different story!"

I agreed with him and promised to hold myself in as much as possible. There was a double bill for that evening: Sembrich in two acts of "Barber of Seville," followed by "Cavalleria Rusticana" with myself and Salignac. While the "Barber" was in progress, I stood in the wings, watching the audience. I wanted to know what kind of people we would find in this town, with which I was then not very familiar. Raising my eyes to the balcony, I saw in the last seats, right up under the roof, rows and rows of men in overalls and rough clothes, their faces black with soot, their eyes shining in the dark. They were the coal miners, of course!

"Poor devils!" I thought, as I watched them. "They have saved their pennies to pay for their seats up there. They have hurried here from their work just as they were. It's probably the first time they have ever heard grand opera."

I called Salignac and pointed them out to him.

"Do you think it would be fair to sing half-heartedly for those poor fellows?" I asked. "I admit that I cannot do it. It's true I am very tired, but I'll rest to-morrow. Who knows! They may even be men from my own country! They say that there are many miners from Décazville here in America."

Salignac, always warm-hearted and generous, felt exactly as I did. We sang that night with all our strength, our nerves, our temperament, and we were fully rewarded for our efforts by the bombardment of applause from the upper galleries. After the performance, I received a magnificent bouquet, to which was attached a document bearing over a hundred signatures:

TO OUR FAMOUS COMPATRIOT

EMMA CALVÉ

FROM HER COUNTRYMEN OF AVEYRON, WHO ARE HAPPY TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO APPLAUD HER AT LAST, AND PRAY TO BE ALLOWED TO PRESENT THEIR RESPECTS.

They came, every one of them, and we embraced in true Latin style, a kiss on either cheek. When it was over, my face was as black as theirs. I looked like a chimney sweep!

I have made many tours alone in America, as well as in the Metropolitan troupe. Truly, I know that great country well, and have seen it grow and flourish astoundingly. I have traversed it from ocean to ocean, from border to border, in every season and under all sorts of conditions.

During my concert tours of 1906 and 1908, one of the dreams of my childhood was realised. I had always longed to live in a gypsy van, to be able to come and go at will, like a true Bohemian, with my house on my back. I had this experience in a glorified degree when I travelled in a private car all over the United States. My pleasure was somewhat marred by the fact that I had to keep my engagements in various cities and towns at a fixed day and hour, but otherwise my luxurious home was a source of unending delight. What fun it was to come back after an evening performance to this little house on wheels, with its comfortable bedrooms, its kitchen, dining room and bath! Everything that heart could desire, even to the amusing and capable services of three negroes supplied by the Pullman Company!

Sometimes, in crowded or dirty cities, we would

arrange to have our car left on a siding in the suburbs. When we were ready to move on to the next destination, we would be picked up by the regular train and attached to the end of a long line of cars. There was a charming balcony full of flowers at the back of my little house, where I could sit all day in the fresh air watching the changing panorama that flowed past me through the peaceful hours.

Often I would return to my car late in the evening, after my concerts. As I prepared for the night the train would begin to move, and I would drop off to sleep, rocked by its gentle motion, carried in the dark toward new scenes and unexplored horizons.

Once, when I was in Canada, I was caught in a blizzard. It snowed all night; and when I woke in the morning, I found it was impossible to leave the car. The snow was in high drifts all around, and neither horses nor automobiles could get through. I had to reach the concert hall somehow, and so I was carried there by two burly men. I laugh to-day, when I think of the picture we made! I was in a red velvet dress, with my hair done in

Spanish fashion, a fur cloak thrown around me, my jewels sparkling in the brilliant sunlight. Every one stopped to stare. I must have looked like a gypsy queen, borne through the snowy streets on the strong arms of my henchmen!

We were not as luxurious as this in the days of the Grau opera tours. We had to make ourselves comfortable in small quarters, and the arrangements were not always of the best. On some of the long runs we had to carry our own food supplies, for the buffets at the stations were so poor that we could not eat there. We had merry times at our improvised suppers, and managed to while away the hours on the train gaily enough. But we were not sorry to be back in New York in the end, and it was there, of course, that we spent the greater part of our season.

I have spoken of my visits to Windsor, and the glimpses I had of England's Queen. It is not amiss, perhaps, to mention that uncrowned sovereign, who was the darling of the American people during her distinguished husband's terms of office —Mrs. Grover Cleveland, wife of the President of the United States.

EMMA CALVÉ ON A CONCERT TOUR IN THE UNITED STATES

It was my curious fate one day, not to meet the great lady—I had already had that pleasure—but to act as her substitute. She had promised to attend a public reception in her honour at a bazaar held for the benefit of some charitable organisation. At the last moment she was taken ill and was unable to go. The ladies in charge decided to ask some opera star to take her place, and selected me.

I can see myself standing on a raised platform in the middle of that room, rather embarrassed, holding a large bouquet on my left arm, and giving "handshakes" to all that crowd of people! At the end of an hour my right hand was worn out. I changed the bouquet over, and continued with my left, to the intense amusement of the bystanders. After I had shaken hands with about five thousand people, I said to myself that nothing in the world would ever induce me to go in for this little game again!

My comrades of the musical world joined the throng and filed solemnly past me, bowing ceremoniously and making polite remarks appropriate to the occasion. I tried to maintain a proper dignity, to live up to my rôle; but I was overcome with

laughter, and I am afraid we all disgraced ourselves.

I have kept the gloves that I wore that day. They started out white; but by the end of the entertainment they looked as though they had been dipped in ink.

So you see, I have played a little of everything in America, from Carmen, the gypsy girl, to the First Lady of the Land!

CHAPTER XIV

A SPANISH AUDIENCE

THE year 1897 saw me in Spain, a brief episode, more like a page from a dime novel than an event in ordinary life! I had been warned, before I went there, that the audiences were difficult to manage. The evening of my first appearance, the famous matador Mazzantini came to me in my dressing room before the performance.

"Don't be upset if you hear a lot of noise," he said, by way of encouragement. "Go ahead bravely, and, above all, do not leave the stage before you have finished your scene. The two artists who appeared here recently were so agitated by their rough reception that they walked off the stage without singing a note. It was a fatal mistake!"

It was most fortunate that I had been thus forewarned. I have certainly never encountered a more frantic public. The moment I appeared on the stage I was greeted with howls, shrieks, snatches of song, remarks hurled across the theatre from one balcony to the other, a bedlam of noise.

I was wearing a blond wig, and this for some reason focussed their attention.

"She is red-headed!" one would call. "No, she isn't! She is a brunette!" answered another. "I've seen her close by! She is a blond!" "How beautiful!" "Not at all! She's ugly." "Is she a Spaniard?" "No! French!" "Hi!" "Yah!" "Whoop!"

I never heard such a clamour!

It was impossible to begin. I was stunned, and believed it was a cabal, until my partner whispered reassuringly:

"It's always like this when an artist makes her début. They'll stop after a while!"

But I could not stand there stupidly doing nothing. I am impatient by nature, and I was not going to wait tamely on their good pleasure. I stepped bravely to the front of the stage.

"My friends," I said in Spanish, and with the most charming smile I could muster, "do you wish me to begin, or do you wish me to go away? If I am to begin, be quiet! If you continue, I shall make you my deepest courtesy and leave!"

It had the desired effect, and silence descended on the auditorium. We were able to begin our duo, and the evening ended in a whirlwind of enthusiasm

and approval. I had a great success, and all went well until the bill was changed.

My second début was in "Cavalleria Rusticana." The same storm of cries and interrogations greeted me as on the first night. Evidently there was a cabal—by whom organised or for what purpose, I have never wished to know.

I was very much discouraged. I went the next day to see the Duc de T., to whom I had a letter of introduction, and I asked him whether I should attempt to sing "Carmen" for such an extraordinary public.

"I would not advise you to do so," he answered frankly. "We do not like that opera in Spain, although we fully appreciate Bizet's genius. I have seen you in the rôle at the Opéra Comique in Paris. You are marvellous in it, and I have too much admiration for your talent and respect for you, to wish to see you in an uncomfortable situation."

"But my contract stipulates that I shall sing 'Carmen' here," I answered. "If I do not do so, I shall call down the wrath of the managers on my unfortunate head! I shall have to pay a large indemnity!"

"Nevertheless, I advise you to go," he said with some insistence. "No one will follow you into France."

Acting on his advice, I decided to leave immediately. When I told one of my comrades my plan, he listened skeptically.

"My dear Calvé," he said, "don't you know that the tenor Marconi was shut up in his room under guard for two weeks, simply because he refused to sing a certain rôle? The laws in this country are strict. The theatres are subsidized by the government, and they make you obey orders as though you were in the army!"

I could not help bursting into laughter at the idea of Carmen being arrested in real earnest, though the situation was becoming rather trying! I packed my trunks, in spite of my friend's gloomy prognostications, and made ready to leave the hotel. Suddenly the proprietor appeared at my door.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "you cannot leave the building! If you attempt to do so, your trunks will be seized. I am telling you for your own good, to save you annoyance. There are two policemen at the door to prevent your escape!"

Imagine my fury and alarm! I went back to my

room and wrote a hasty note to the Marquis de R., who was then the French Minister, and at whose house I had sung a few days before. I told him my predicament and begged him to advise me what to do. In a very short time, one of the attachés of the Embassy arrived.

"Madame," he said in his most courtly manner, "take my arm, I beg you. I will escort you to the station. Fear nothing. You are under the protection of France! Leave your maid to take care of your luggage," he added with a smile. "They certainly cannot force *her* to sing Carmen! She can join you later."

Thus did I leave Spain! It is the only country, by the way, where the great Patti was hooted! All this happened some thirty years ago. I believe that to-day the public is less ardent!

I went back to Paris after my Spanish adventure. There I renewed my engagement at the Opéra Comique, but it was not for long. Mr. Grau cabled for me to return to America immediately. The Carmen who had replaced me in New York did not prove the success that had been expected. Grau paid my forfeit at the Opéra Comique, and my entry at the Metropolitan was triumphant.

CHAPTER XV

THE CITY OF MEXICO

ON one of my innumerable concert tours in America, I went to Mexico. It was so long ago, that I have almost forgotten the year! At that time, Mexico remained in about the same stage of civilisation as Spain had been in two centuries before. When I visited the haciendas near Vera Cruz or on the outskirts of the city of Mexico, it seemed to me that I had stepped backward through the ages to a place and time where the old patriarchal customs were in use—a land which still held the flavour of the Middle Ages.

One day, I was taking a walk on the outskirts of a small town not far from the capitol. I had stopped for a moment to rest by the wayside, in the shadow of a grove of banana palms, when I saw coming toward me along the dusty road a procession which seemed to have walked straight out of the past!

At the head of the cavalcade rode two mounted *alguazil,* looking more like heralds of old in their

gorgeous trappings than modern guardians of law and order. They were followed by a troop of men in black, servants, retainers, petty clerks and dependents, all the types of followers that swelled the cortège of a great seigneur of the old days. The mules on which these men rode were gaily caparisoned, carrying, every one of them, a cascade of jingling bells.

In the centre of the group rode a beautiful woman holding a baby in her arms, both of them clothed in sweeping silken garments covered with jewels! The focus of attention, however, was the proud master and father! He rode a white charger, and his costume was in every detail what might have been worn by his far-off ancestor in seventeenth-century Spain. Only his hat was different, for he wore the peaked sombrero of Mexico, covered with a red scarf and ornamented all around its border with balls of gold.

Haughty and aloof, he passed the place where my maid and I were standing. He did not deign even to glance our way, but with a lordly gesture he threw us silver coins from the heavy bag that hung on his saddle bow. Amused and fascinated, we

followed the procession into the village, and learned that our noble cavalier was a rich distiller, taking his son and heir to church to be baptised! We watched him as he dismounted with his cortège in the square in front of the cathedral. We saw him toss a fortune to the gaping crowd, then turn and walk into the church, leaving the mob outside to fight and squabble for his kingly bounty!

Mexico City is situated at a very great altitude. I knew this before I went, but I never for a moment thought that it would affect my voice. The first days that I was there, I did not feel very well, but I thought nothing of it. My impresario came to me several times before my first concert, inquiring anxiously after my health, and asking whether I thought I was in good voice. I assured him that all was well, but the night of my concert I felt extremely uncomfortable. My breath was poor, and I was very much dissatisfied with my performance. After the concert, I was talking with the French Minister.

"It is most extraordinary," he said, "that you were able to sing so soon after your arrival. Do you know," he added with a smile, "the race horses

that are imported to this part of the country have to be kept here two or three months in order to become acclimated. It is out of the question to race them during that period. I was astonished that you were able to get through your long programme so soon after your arrival!"

CHAPTER XVI

A CUBAN INTERLUDE

I MADE my first trip to Cuba not long after my tour in Mexico. The island then was not as it is now! Since the United States took charge of it, everything has been made clean, comfortable and civilised, so that the little cities of Cuba can now rival their American sisters in orderliness and luxury.

I had gone to Florida one year, for a few weeks' rest and in the hope of curing a rather persistent cold. After we had been there for some time, my travelling companion suggested that we should go across to Cuba and visit that romantic island. I was delighted with the idea, and we started immediately.

Havana was our first stopping place. I can remember its odour to this day—a mixture of pepper, tobacco, burnt sugar, and squalour! Our efforts to find a hotel where we could bear to spend the night were long and painful! We would go to a hostelry, make our inquiries, ask to see the rooms.

One glance at the beds we were supposed to occupy would be sufficient to send us flying!

Finally we managed to find a passable lodging, where, after we had directed the necessary cleaning up, we were able to spend the night. The next morning our quarters were invaded by a swarm of shawl merchants, whose packs were filled with the most gorgeous Spanish shawls. The papers had proclaimed the presence of Carmen in Havana, and I was expected to buy the whole supply! The shawls were so beautiful that I would have been glad to do so, but I should have had to sing "Carmen" for a thousand years in order to use them all!

We travelled about a good deal, in spite of our difficulty in finding places to sleep. I remember that at Santiago we lay on wire springs, without mattress or pad of any kind! The food was indescribable. We ate nothing but fruit and guava jelly. Nevertheless, we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. We travelled, sang and laughed, and learned the *danza,* the dance which later developed into the tango.

Finally we started homeward. Arriving at Havana, we lingered on a few days, having finally

found a comfortable hotel where we were well served and pleasantly entertained. One day I received a cablegram from my manager in New York, asking me to return at once, as I was urgently needed.

We rushed to our rooms and were soon packed and ready to sail. The little chambermaid, Pacca, who had done so much to make us comfortable, was helping me to strap up my last bag.

"Madame is quite right to leave," she remarked in Spanish. "She has been sleeping in the same bed in which the poor little ballet dancer from the opera died only a week or so ago. She died of yellow fever! The town is full of it!"

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "You miserable child! Why didn't you tell me at once? I'll catch it as sure as fate! How could you do such a terrible thing?"

"Madame was so kind," the girl answered in tears. "I didn't want Madame to go away! Besides," she added fatalistically, "Madame knows the proverb, *Nadie se muere hasta que Dios lo quiere.*" (No one dies before God wills.)

Cold comfort for me! But there was no use wasting words. The fat was already in the fire.

I had done everything I should not have done under the circumstances—eaten raw fruit and oysters, walked in the midday sun, rowed on the mosquito infested inlets! I left Havana and returned to my work, never giving another thought to the matter. *"Nadie se muere hasta que Dios lo quiere"*—

CHAPTER XVII

ST. PETERSBURG

MY first encounter with a Russian audience was truly in keeping with the traditions of that emotional and impulsive people. The day before my début in St. Petersburg, my impresario arrived at the hotel early in the morning to inform me that a rehearsal of "Hamlet" with the Italian tenor Battistini was scheduled for the afternoon.

"Be prepared!" he admonished me. "Make yourself beautiful! The rehearsals are often attended by the ladies of the court, the Grand Dukes and Duchesses. In fact, it is impossible to tell who will be there, for the members of the royal household are very fond of music and like to hear the artists who come here for the first time, before they make their regular appearance."

When I arrived at the theatre, I found a basket of water lilies in my dressing room, with a note from the Grand Duchess Vladimir, saying that they were for Ophelia's mad scene. The moment I walked on the stage, I saw that my manager had

spoken truly. The theatre was crowded! All the cadets from the naval training school were there, as well as many officers and ladies of distinction. I was glad that I had followed my manager's hint and put on a becoming dress! In the mad scene I wore the lilies the Duchess had sent me, twined in my long black hair, very beautiful and luxuriant in those days, and which I allowed to fall over my shoulders for the last act.

The effect was apparently excellent, for I was recalled twenty times after the curtain went down. The Russian public is very artistic, very sensitive, and, above all, very enthusiastic. The last time I came out, I found the cadets climbing up on to the stage! They had chased the musicians from their places, swarmed into the orchestra pit, and were clambering over the footlights to get at me. The first thing I knew, I was surrounded by the young madcaps, who kissed my hands, my scarf, the sleeves of my dress, overwhelming me with compliments and exclamations of delight. I could not get away from them. Finally, in an excess of enthusiasm, one of them bit my arm!

"Fiends! Savages!" I cried. "Are you going to devour me? Let me pass!" And with a heroic

Calvé as Ophelia

effort, I succeeded in reaching my dressing room and shutting myself in behind locks and bars!

The next week, when I was to sing "Carmen," I told the director that it was absolutely necessary for me to be left in peace after the performance, and that therefore I would not take any curtain calls. I was determined not to risk another such ovation!

"Good Lord! That will never do!" he exclaimed in despair. "You must make your bow as usual. It's just their little way. You mustn't mind them! Every one would think you were putting on airs if you did not accept the homage of the public."

Thus adjured, I consented! And indeed, no one did climb up on the stage when I took my call. The public was wildly enthusiastic, but stayed on its own side of the footlights. When I left the theatre, however, I found a mob of young officers and cadets waiting at the stage door! Before I could say a word, they lifted me up in their arms and carried me across the snow to my waiting *troïka!*

While I was singing in St. Petersburg, an impressive memorial service took place at the Basilica of St. Paul, in honour of the former Czar. The French Ambassador had given me a ticket which

permitted me to witness the ceremonies from the seats reserved for the diplomatic corps.

Dressed in my best, I arrived, as is my wont, promptly on the hour named. I was received by the master of ceremonies, who asked me something in Russian. I knew only two words of that formidable language, *da* and *niet,* yes and no. Boldly I made use of half my vocabulary and answered *Da!* to his question. Whereupon, he conducted me with much ceremony to an excellent seat in the highest place of the reserved enclosure. The crowd outside the grating stared at me curiously. I supposed they envied my excellent position, and I sat there quite calmly until I heard the organ burst into the strains of the national anthem. Turning, I beheld the Czar and the Czarina, with all the lords and ladies of their suite, approaching me in a solemn procession.

Fortunately for me, the Duchess Vladimir was among them. She detached herself from the group and hurried to my side.

"Madame Calvé," she whispered in an agitated undertone, "get up quickly! You are sitting in the seat of the Empress Mother!"

I could have sunk through the floor! Covered

with confusion, I rose hastily from my seat and made my way out of the enclosure. I had to pass in front of the whole court before I could reach the modest place that had been reserved for me at the lower end of the church.

The next day I went to the Duchess to make my apologies and to explain what had happened. She was very much amused.

"Ah, my friend!" she said. "One can go far in this country with a little word like that!"

My unintentional blunder in the cathedral was apparently not held against me, for not long afterward I was engaged to sing in the home of a lady of the highest standing in court circles. A violinist of international reputation was to play at the same time. The night of the performance a superb *troïka,* laden with gorgeous fur robes, came for me and carried me to the house where I was to sing. My comrade had already arrived when I made my appearance. We were received by a most charming and gracious lady who was apparently entirely alone! She begged us to begin at once.

"My guests are there," she said, indicating a high screen that separated the long salon into two parts, "but they wish to remain incognito. Will you be

so kind as to permit them to listen to you from the other side of the screen?"

I was so astonished at the request that I was on the point of raising some objection; but, observing that my colleague appeared to take the situation philosophically, I followed his lead. As we walked toward the piano, he turned to me.

"Do not be alarmed," he said. "I have had a similar experience once or twice before in this country. It seems to be merely one of their strange customs!"

Bravely I took my place before that silken barrier, and sang as best I could to its unresponsive expanse. Our hostess applauded discreetly, and I heard, from time to time, murmurs of pleasure and approbation from our invisible audience.

A week or so later, I was summoned to the Imperial Palace to give a concert there. The procedure was almost identical with that of the enigmatic evening. Were the same personages present? Was it the same mysterious audience? I have never known!

In Russia, as in all the countries that I have visited, I knew many different types of people. It is one of the privileges of an artistic life, that

in our profession we can consort with high and low alike, with kings and peasants, artists and socialists, governors and rebels. One of my acquaintances in St. Petersburg was an ardent young revolutionist, a nihilist fiery and determined. She told me her hopes, her dreams. She described the sufferings of the people, and explained to me the ideals of their champions.

"You need not look at me with that expression of astonishment," she said to me one day after a particularly passionate harangue. "You, with your artist's soul, would feel as I do, if you lived here long!"

Poor little thing! Six months later, she wrote to me from Siberia.

"See how far my convictions have led me!" she said in her letter. "I am at the far end of Europe, dying of cold and hunger. How often do I think with longing of those unforgettable hours when I heard you singing Ophelia and Carmen!"

CHAPTER XVIII

A CONCERT IN THE PALACE OF THE SULTAN OF TURKEY

ONE year, on my return from Russia, I visited Turkey. While I was in Constantinople, I sang at the home of the French Ambassador. There I met Nazim Pasha, one of the leading figures of the day and a familiar at the Court of Abdul-Hamid. He asked me whether it would interest me to sing for the Sultan. Needless to say, I assured him that it would!

A week later, a *chaouch* of the Palace, one of those magnificent mounted servants whom I had occasionally seen in the streets, brought me word that His Majesty, the Sultan, summoned me to the Palace and gave me permission to sing in the harem. A little note, unsigned but written in a feminine hand, begged me to bring the music of "Carmen," the comb, fan, mantilla, and, most particularly, the castanets for the dance.

I felt an undeniable thrill of terror at the idea of coming into contact with the "Red Sultan,"

whose word made Islam tremble, and whose evil reputation had spread to every corner of the globe. The moment I crossed the threshold of the gorgeous palace of Yildiz, it seemed to me that the sun was swallowed up, that all the radiance and glory that flooded the Bosphorus had disappeared!

I was conducted into a great hall hung with marvellous tapestries, where slave girls, in garments of many-coloured silk, stood straight and motionless against the walls. A few moments after my arrival, the Sultanas entered. Clothed in all the splendour of their native costume, lovely and welcoming, they clustered about me. One of them, who spoke French very well, begged me to sing the Song of the Birds, the "Mysoli," which I had sung at the Embassy, and of which they had heard so much.

I had hardly begun to sing, when I became aware of a strange sensation of anxiety, a sort of terror, surging up within me. I turned and saw a man standing at a little distance from me. Ugly, lean, sinister, his eagle's gaze fastened upon me, he dominated the room. Every one bowed before him, the slaves prostrate on the floor, the Sultanas bent low. I realised that it was He! My voice caught

in my throat, and my poor little accompanist stopped short, trembling with fear. He seated himself, without speaking a word, and signed to us to continue.

I finished my song and sang many more. Finally, I dared to look at my terrifying listener. He seemed abstracted, distant, indifferent to my singing, unconscious even of my presence, as though lost in painful meditation.

The little Sultana who had spoken to me before urged me to commence "Carmen" at once. The Sultan roused himself when I began, and seemed to take some little pleasure in my dancing. Suddenly his eyes gleamed strangely as he watched me.

"Good heavens!" I thought. "If I should have the bad luck to please him!"

I instantly pictured myself shut up in the harem, and my alarmed imagination evoked a lurid drama! Meanwhile, the rhythm of my dance was bringing me nearer and nearer the Sultan. All at once, an expression of terror crossed his face. He rose from his chair precipitately, and disappeared! I never saw him again!

The ladies of the seraglio surrounded me with compliments and attentions. Coffee was served in

delicate cups mounted on feet of gold and set with precious stones. Curious sweets on golden platters were presented by the slaves who, according to the etiquette of the Palace, wore draperies of crimson velvet embroidered in gold, thrown over their shoulders. At a given signal, one of the slaves began the oriental "Dance of the Scarf." She was extraordinarily graceful, swirling and weaving the flashing silken veil about her with languid, rhythmic movements. Finally, one of the Sultanas approached me and ceremoniously presented a golden chalice of exquisite workmanship.

"From His Majesty, the Sultan," she explained, "who thanks you, and begs you to pardon him for not being able to present this cup himself. His Majesty is indisposed," she added, "and has therefore asked me to express to you all his admiration for your beautiful dance."

I left the Palace as though returning from a distant and incredible voyage. I felt that I had been bewitched, carried away to another world. A few days later, I told my adventures to one of my friends attached to the Embassy.

"It is the first time," I concluded, laughing, "that

my Carmen dance has ever made any one run away!"

"You probably approached too near the Sultan," my friend answered, "and it alarmed him. He is consumed with suspicion, haunted by the fear of murder!"

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "Afraid of my castanets, my fan?"

"Ah!" retorted the Frenchman. "Could you not have had Carmen's dagger in your garter?"

CHAPTER XIX

CABRIERES

IT was after my first engagement in America that I was able to fulfil the dream of which I have already spoken. I went back to Aveyron that year after my fatiguing winter's work, with the idea in my mind of buying a farm for my father, where he could settle down and spend the rest of his life. I asked the notary in our village whether there was any land for sale in the neighbourhood.

"Yes," he answered. "There is the farm of Cabrières, but I am afraid the castle goes with it. You would not want that, I am sure!"

The name brought to my mind the long-forgotten picture of that sunny road and my impossible vision! I asked to be shown the castle, and we went there with my father. While we were looking it over, he remonstrated with me long and patiently.

"My child," he said, "it is sheer folly. It is much too great an undertaking for you. The whole place needs repairs. Give up this wild idea. You really

don't need a castle. Be a good girl, and forget your dream!"

But I am hard to move, once my mind has been set upon an idea. I have always done, within the limits of possibility, what I have wanted to do. I went ahead without consulting my father, and made the necessary arrangements. The following Sunday I told him that we were invited to dinner with the farmers of Cabrières.

I put the great key of the postern gate at my father's place; and when he picked up his napkin, it rolled out at his feet. He was overcome with surprise and ready to cry with joy. It was one of the happiest hours of my life!

My father lived there long and happily, and there I have built my home, a resting place and a refuge, a nest to return to after my distant flights. I have brought back to it the riches of experience and memory, the treasures of a long and fortunate career. Some of them are tangible—furniture, pictures, books, mementos of all kinds. Others are invisible, yet even more real—the unforgotten presences of the past. Cabrières is a necessary part of my life. I truly believe that the extraordinary preservation of my voice is largely due to the long

THE CHATEAU OF CABRIÈRES
Seen from the Highway

months I spend in that quiet spot, far from worldly gaieties and distractions. If I stay away too long, I become ill, like a plant deprived of water. My lungs crave the dry, bracing air of the mountain plains. I need my country, my home!

There are no trees in our part of the world. The clouds, the rocks, the vast stretches of upland covered with heather, box or scrub pine—this is all that can be seen. It is not the type of country to please those who like pretty places. It is melancholy, my poor Aveyron. Perhaps I love it for that very reason!

The spirit of the past which permeates it makes me calm, contemplative. Even conversation seems out of place there. How restful it is, how reposeful, after the turmoil and constant agitation of America!

The little castle of Cabrières dates from 1050. I have looked up its history and followed its fortunes down the ages. An Englishman was killed under its walls. It saw the horrors of the religious wars and was the refuge of a certain group of Knights Templars.

The old man from whom I bought it rendered me, quite unconsciously, an invaluable service. He was fond of trees, and planted a grove near the

château. I bless him from my heart, every day that I sit under their welcome shade! They are the only trees to be found for many miles around.

Like every castle with a shade of self-respect, Cabrières has its ghost. One of the rooms is called the chamber of the phantom, though I shall have to admit that I myself have never seen its spectral inhabitant. The villagers, however, are quite convinced of its presence.

Many years ago, the story runs, an arrogant knight, one of my predecessors in the castle, determined to build a bridge which should stretch from one hill to the other. Every day he built a little. Every night a wicked demon destroyed his work. The bridge was never finished, but the unfortunate knight, as a punishment for his pride, was condemned to return year after year to the scene of his failure. The peasants still see him in his huge hat and long cloak, stalking beneath the walls of Cabrières.

My real guests are rather more to my taste than this poor, futile spectre of the bridge. I have had many delightful visitors at Cabrières, and the presence of my friends has added greatly to my love for the place.

One year—it was the summer of 1894—the "Cadets de Gascogne," that interesting society of artists, actors and writers, honoured me with a visit in the course of its journey through France. The party included Monsieur Leygues, Minister of the Beaux Arts, Benjamin Constant, the distinguished artist, Mounet-Sully of the Comédie Française, Gailhard, director of the Opéra, and Monsieur and Madame Adolphe Brisson.

I can still see Mounet-Sully declaiming the stanzas of the "Fury of Orestes" from the height of the rocky platform that juts out in front of the Château, like the prow of a ship. It is there, on this same platform, that I have stood many times, answering the songs of the shepherds, who on the distant uplands watch their sheep.

I wish that I could hand on to the children of to-day my own passionate love for these old folk-songs of France. They are the expression of the soul of the nation, tuneful, lovely, filled with the poetry and the lore of the past. How much more beautiful they are than the inept refrains of the music-hall tunes of to-day!

Not far from Cabrières, on the other side of the mountain, are the famous Gorges of the Tarn.

One of the sights of this region is the grotto of Dargilan, a huge labyrinthine cave filled with stalactites and stalagmites.

One day I visited the grotto with some friends. We were conducted through its wonders by a young shepherd, who explained it all to us in the inimitable patois of his country. He was only sixteen, but already full of wisdom.

"Do you like being a shepherd?" we asked him, as we walked along. "Wouldn't you prefer to be a mechanic and travel over the world, seeing new sights and countries? Don't you find it rather stupid, at your age, to stay in one place all the time?"

"No, Madame," he answered, with complete conviction. "I want to be a shepherd all my life. I am happy to be out there in the pastures, watching the sheep. I think of the *Bon Dieu* and at night the stars are so beautiful!"

We came finally to a tremendous cave. Its vast, mysterious depths fascinated me. I began to sing. The boy started and turned toward me.

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "How lovely! If the mistress could only hear you, she would give you a job! You could come every day and sing for the tour-

ists. I am sure she would pay you a lot of money for it."

I was duly impressed.

"How much do you think she would pay me?" I asked.

"Well, now," he said judiciously, screwing up his brow and scratching his head, "it's hard to say. I think she might go as high as five francs a day. It would be good business!"

"I'll think it over," I answered. "It is very kind of you to give me the tip. But don't you know me," I added, "I live over the way, at Cabrières?"

"No, no, Madame," the boy answered. "I have never been as far as that. Our church is up there on the plateau, and that is as far as I have travelled."

A year later, I was again visiting the grotto. The boy was still there. He recognised me at once, and came toward me, twisting his cap in his hands, apparently much embarrassed.

"Good morning, Madame," he mumbled. "I guess you had a good laugh at me last year."

"What do you mean?" I asked. "Why should I laugh at you?"

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY

"I was told afterward who you were," he answered. "A nice kind of a fool you must have thought me, with my five francs a day! They tell me that in the Americas you don't have to do more than yawn to earn eight pairs of oxen!"

CHAPTER XX

TWO FAMOUS OPERA SINGERS

THE first opera singer to cast her spell over my youthful heart was Adelina Patti. What a picture the name evokes! A beautiful, fascinating being, with a voice beyond compare. Her charm and perfection seemed to me divine, almost miraculous. I was only sixteen when, with my mother, we used to stand in line for hours, in order to procure a modest seat in the very topmost row of the gallery at the Théâtre des Italiens. What joy and admiration filled my heart as I listened to her! She was then at the height of her splendour, bewitching and lovely. As for her voice, there has never been anything like it. One might compare it to a string of luminous pearls, perfectly matched, every jewel flawless, identical in form and colour.

She began her career when she was little more than a child. Her début took place in the United States, where she was touring with her father and mother. She was sixteen years old, but she had

retained her childish tastes and habits. Her dolls, which she adored, had to be taken away from her, in order to force her to pay attention to her lessons. When she had done her work well, they would be returned to her, and she would be perfectly happy, playing with them for the rest of the day. Her teacher and impresario, Maurice Strakosch, launched her in America and later managed her many opera and concert tours.

I was told by an old friend of hers, a conductor who had worked with her for many years, that she lived very much apart from her colleagues of the stage. Once she was asked her opinion of a new tenor with whom she had sung the night before.

"To tell the truth," she answered, "I have no idea what he is like. I never paid any attention to him. He must be good, for I did not notice that he was bad!"

When she was asked with whom she would like to sing,

"Engage any one you like," she would answer. "As long as he hasn't a tremolo and sings in tune, it makes no difference to me!"

Patti never attended the rehearsals of the operas in which she appeared. She was thus saved the wear

and tear of those fatiguing ordeals, and was able to preserve, as one of her friends expressed it, "the velvet of her voice."

Her husband, Monsieur Nicolini, told me, when I was visiting them in their beautiful château of Craig-y-Nos, that she did not even read on the days she was to sing.

"The delicate nerves that control the muscles of the throat," he explained, "are stimulated into activity and cause an unconscious contraction at each word read by the eyes."

I am afraid that I myself do most of my reading on the days I sing. It is in those hours of enforced repose that I am able to enjoy my books.

Patti sang all the rôles of the Italian repertoire exquisitely. Her vocalisation was remarkable, particularly in "The Barber of Seville." It is said that one day she sang the aria, "Una voce poco fa," for Rossini. The composer listened without comment.

"How do you like it?" Patti asked finally.

"It's very nice," answered the *maestro*. "But what is it?"

"Don't you recognise your own 'Barber?' " Patti asked in astonishment.

"*Your* 'Barber,' you mean!" he retorted. "It

is not mine at all! It is easy to see that your master has Strakoschanised my poor opera!"

One day in Naples a good many years ago, a friend of mine came to the hotel where I was staying, with a very pleasant invitation.

"Do you want to hear a true Italian voice?" she asked. "There is an excellent tenor singing at the Fondo Theatre. Will you go with me? I think you will enjoy it."

I accepted with alacrity, and a few hours later I was listening to this singer, whose name I had not even heard before. I was overcome with astonishment.

"What a marvellous—what an extraordinary—voice!" I exclaimed. "I have rarely heard anything so beautiful. It is a miracle!"

"Ah!" my friend answered proudly. "In Naples beautiful voices are as common as pebbles on the beach!"

"This is no pebble!" I cried. "This is a diamond of the first water!"

At the end of the opera I turned to my friend.

"Tell me again," I asked, "the name of this remarkable artist!"

"Caruso!"

Ah, that divine, that admirable, that unique voice! Force of nature moulded by an exquisite art! Profound, moving, joyous, a voice of sunlight compound of all the prismatic colours! But what can I say that has not already been said of that great singer whose untimely death is mourned by the vast army of his friends and followers?

Caruso's heart was as great as his genius, as every one knows who had the pleasure of associating with him. I remember very vividly an incident that illustrates his extraordinary kindness and the generosity with which he expended his talent. It was years after my first introduction to him in Naples. We were both in London at the time and were engaged to sing at a concert given in the home of a lady who lived at Wimbledon outside of London. As we journeyed out to Wimbledon together I noticed that Caruso looked worried and preoccupied.

"What is the matter," I asked. "Why do you look so sad, so depressed?"

"Oh, Calvé!" he exclaimed. "I am very unhappy! Your motto which proclaims that he who sings enchants his sorrow is entirely untrue. I sing all the time, but it does not drive away my trouble. On the contrary, it only makes it worse!"

"But you enchant the public, my poor friend!" I answered. "And that should bring you some consolation!"

When we reached our destination, we found that we were a little early, and we had time to talk to our hostess and to make inquiries concerning the health of her son. We knew that this young man was an invalid, living in a secluded corner of the great park of the estate, where a pavilion had been built for his special use. Our hostess told us that he had sent his greetings and his regrets that he could not be present at the concert. She added that he had been particularly distressed at not being able to hear us sing, for he was passionately fond of music and now, in his invalided condition he was entirely deprived of one of the chief pleasures of his life.

Caruso looked at me and I read his thoughts.

"Yes, yes!" I exclaimed. "Let us go and sing for the poor boy before the guests arrive!"

Our hostess was delighted and led the way to the pavilion where her son lived. As we walked through the gardens Caruso turned to me.

"I know you are tired and so am I, terribly tired, but it can't be helped! We will sing just a

little for the poor fellow—a song or two apiece. It will not hurt us!"

We were, indeed, both very weary. Caruso was in the midst of his Covent Garden season, singing as often as three or four times a week. He was tremendously popular and in constant demand. I myself had just finished a long concert tour and was fairly exhausted.

But for us, poor artists, there is no halting by the way! Are we not required, at a specified hour and moment, to give of ourselves, no matter what the cost? Well or ill, happy or in despair we must be ready to distribute joy to others. Though our own hearts may be breaking, we must give happiness to those who hear us, we must cast the spell of lovely dreams over our listeners, we must give them the pleasure, the emotion, the exaltation that makes them forget the sorrows and anxieties of mundane things and dwell for a little while in a happier world.

When we reached the pavilion and stood beside that bed of pain, Caruso put aside his own preoccupations and fatigues as though they were a useless garment, and devoted himself to the task of bringing a little light into that worn, pathetic

face. What a magnificent concert he gave the poor boy! Neapolitan songs, arias from his most popular operas, ballads, songs, everything that came into his head.

"Encore, encore!" begged the sick boy's ecstatic eyes.

I took up the task, singing my French and Spanish songs, all the gay and tender tunes I could remember.

"Encore, encore!" whispered that eager, broken voice.

I began my Carmen dance, and Caruso, appreciating how tired I was, came to my assistance. His golden voice took up the air of the dance. With snapping fingers and beating foot, he imitated the sound of the castanets, he twanged an imaginary guitar. He was a host in himself, a whole orchestral accompaniment in one person!

The invalid was beside himself with joy. Forgetting his suffering and pain, he urged us on with exclamations of delight and appreciation. We continued our impromtu programme, until our hostess, who had returned to the house after escorting us to the pavilion, reappeared on the scene in much agitation.

"The guests have all arrived!" she exclaimed. "The drawing room is crowded and every one is wondering what has happened to you. They have been waiting more than an hour and are becoming impatient!"

"Bah!" exclaimed Caruso with a laugh. "It will not hurt them to wait a little! Look at your son's happy face. Isn't it more worth while to sing for him than for all the others put together?"

CHAPTER XXI

ARTISTS AND FRIENDS

GENIUS might well be called the expression of a superhuman energy. This definition can be applied with peculiar appropriateness to the great Sarah Bernhardt who has given, for so many years, an example of prodigious and unflagging activity.

Braving illness and age, overcoming physical handicaps and constant anxieties, she has continued year after year her tremendous world-wide tours, teaching the nations of the earth to admire and applaud the dramatic art of France. She might indeed with justice be called the High Priestess of that art, for she has probably done more than any one person to carry its message to many lands and people. Her vital flame seems to be unquenchable. She is astonishingly resilient, ever ready for new undertakings and enterprises. No detail is too small for her attention, just as no effort is too great to obtain her ends.

Not long ago I had the pleasure of taking a

group of young friends and pupils to see the great actress, who was at the moment playing at Montpellier, which is the largest city within motoring distance of Cabrières. I was anxious that they should see this remarkable exponent of the dramatic art, for they were all, in one way or another, aspirants to the lyric or the spoken stage. We sat spellbound through the performance, forgetting time and place, enthralled by her art.

When the play was over, we, the audience, were actually exhausted by the intensity of feeling which the great artist had made us share with her. How much more weary must she herself have been by the tremendous outpouring of vital energy that the rôle required! I was reluctant to disturb her, but my importunate young friends insisted that they must pay their homage to the incomparable actress.

"I will do my best," I answered, "but I fear she will be too tired!"

I made my way behind the scenes and was received most cordially in the artist's dressing room. At the first glance I saw that she was indeed worn out by the exhausting performance she had just completed.

"I came to plead for some young friends of mine," I explained, after we had exchanged the usual greetings. "They long to see you and lay at your feet the tribute of their enthusiastic appreciation. But I fear that this is not an opportune moment."

"No, no, Calvé, I am too tired," she answered in a weary voice. "Indeed I cannot make another effort—I cannot do anything more!"

She closed her eyes and her whole being drooped in a complete abandonment of fatigue. I rose to go immediately.

"They will be disappointed," I said. "But it does not matter. They will always remember the marvellous experience you have given them to-day, and I can at any rate thank you in their name."

As I turned toward the door, that magic voice, which has held so many thousands under its golden enchantment, stopped me.

"Let them come!" Bernhardt exclaimed, "I will receive them! But not here. At the hotel where I am staying. I will go there immediately!"

I returned with my good news to the band of expectant youngsters. We were soon in the foyer of the hotel awaiting the promised arrival. The

doors flew open, the place was suddenly filled with a vivid presence. Was this the worn, exhausted woman I had left a few minutes before in the dressing room of the theatre? The transformation was complete. Charming, vivacious, scintillating, she swept up to us. She had a brilliant smile for each of my young friends, a laughing word, greetings and compliments were exchanged. Then she was gone again, leaving in those young hearts a vision of eternal youth, a fascinating and indelible impression of the Divine Sarah.

Among my many colleagues and fellow workers in the operatic world, the memory of Elena Sanz remains particularly dear to me. She was a singer of rare talent, beautiful and lovable. She had an unusual voice, and we used often to sing Spanish duets together for the amusement of our friends.

One day it occurred to us to try our luck in true Bohemian fashion. We disguised ourselves as wandering ballad singers and went out into the streets of Paris, to see whether we could not earn some pennies for the poor. We were both young—and not ugly! Guitar in hand, scarf on head, off we went in search of adventure.

We started on the Champs Élysées itself and asked the first concierge, sitting like a guardian dragon in her lodge, for permission to sing in the court of her house. We were refused! Again we tried, with no better result. They all turned us away.

Undaunted, we continued until we found a Cerberus more gentle than the others, who acceded to our entreaties. We were allowed to go into the court, and there we began our song. We threw ourselves into it, with all our hearts, our voices, our talent. It was a duet which our friends admired particularly, and we sang it as well as we knew how. Suddenly a window on the ground floor was thrown open.

"How long is this howling going to continue?" a furious voice shouted from the depths of a darkened room. "Who are these witches, destroying my peace with their hideous voices and false notes? Concierge!" the man called at the top of his lungs. "Concierge! Turn these women out!"

We fled precipitately. Once in the street, we did not know whether to laugh or cry.

"Do you really think we sang out of tune?" Elena asked, ruefully.

"I don't know," I answered, in equal dejection. "It's dreadful. I feel as though I had neither voice nor talent. Let's go home!"

We walked along silently for a few minutes.

"I know what we'll do!" exclaimed Elena suddenly. "We'll accept that invitation to the Spanish Embassy, which we had thought of refusing! Come! Hurry! We'll dress in our best, and see whether they like us or not!"

Late that evening, surrounded by an enthusiastic group of friends and acquaintances, who were complimenting us on our performance, we had the courage to tell our sad tale!

"How extraordinary!" exclaimed one of the guests. "That is the very story Monsieur X was just telling me!"

She turned to the man who was standing beside her, and added, "Now you see who it was you chased away!"

Every one in the room burst into laughter, except the poor man himself, who was overcome with confusion.

It does not always pay to be too realistic! I remember that I nearly killed a colleague of mine in

an attempt to follow his directions literally. He was an artist of talent, a tenor named Devoyood. He interpreted the rôle of Valentine in "Faust," when I was singing Marguerite. In the duel scene, he was supposed to be killed by the sword of Mephistopheles. He asked me to come to him after he had fallen, and to pick up his head between my hands. I was then to let it fall to the ground, to show that he was quite dead.

"It must go 'pouf!'" he added, by way of emphasis.

"But it will hurt you!" I protested.

"No, no!" he answered. "Go to it! I want to get the effect!"

On the opening night I did as I was told, but I miscalculated the distance. His head fell to the floor with a dreadful thud!

"You have killed me!" roared the dead man, in heart-breaking accents.

I was overcome with laughter, and was scarcely able to make my exit with proper dignity. The following day, the newspapers commented most favourably on this scene. They thought the effect studied, and we had to repeat it night after night. My first mistake, however, taught

me to calculate the distance with greater care!

My experiences have not always had as amusing a dénouement as this. One cannot spend a lifetime on the stage without occasionally encountering annoying individuals and distressing experiences. Like the rest of the world, there are all sorts of singers and actors, and once in a while a comrade will take pleasure in teasing or vexing his fellow artists right in the midst of a performance. Often this sort of fooling on the stage is merely the exuberance of high spirits. Sometimes, however, it is actuated by less admirable motives. On the whole, I have encountered few mean and malicious spirits among my theatrical friends. One incident stands out in my mind as an exception which proves this rule.

It was on the occasion of one of my tours outside of France. I was appearing in "Carmen" with a group of foreign singers whom I had never known before. As I was a visiting artist, engaged for one or two performances only, the company had rehearsed the opera before I came, and was practically ready for the performance. When I arrived I went to one rehearsal only—the dress rehearsal—on the day before the first night. We went through

the entire opera in order to arrange the necessary stage business in relation to my part. In the last act we rehearsed, with particular care, the scene in which Carmen is killed, and I explained to the tenor, who was singing the rôle of Don José for the first time, exactly how to carry out the action of this very dramatic and violent scene. All the details were clearly understood between us, and agreed upon to what I thought was our mutual satisfaction.

On the night of the performance all went well and smoothly until the last act, though I will admit that I found the company, particularly Don José, rather wooden and unresponsive! The performance was being cordially received, however, and I suspected nothing until I found myself on the stage alone with the tenor in the last act. Just as the scene was rising to its climax and Don José is supposed to pursue Carmen across the square and kill her, my partner planted himself squarely in the middle of the stage with his back to the audience.

"Now," he exclaimed between his teeth, "you can do what you please! I'm not going to run around the stage after you!"

Imagine my stupefaction! The audience, of

course, could not hear him, nor see his malevolent and jeering expression. On the other hand, my face was clearly visible, and I had to control my features and carry on the part as though nothing had happened to break the thread of the action. What a dilemma! How was I to finish the scene if he did not do his part? Only a few bars of music remained before Don José must kill Carmen, or the whole performance would be ruined. For an angry moment I was ready to drop the whole business and walk off the stage, but I realised almost simultaneously that this was exactly what my kind partner of the evening wished me to do. He hoped to create a scandal which would react disastrously on me. I was a stranger, an outsider, and could easily be made the scapegoat. It was cleverly planned, for no one was on the stage to hear his words or see what he was doing. Anything that happened would, of course, be considered my fault. All this flashed through my mind in a few seconds, as I continued my part and tried frantically to think of a new bit of stage business that would fit the unprecedented situation. I managed somehow to hit upon a method of getting killed by this stolid Don José, whirling up to him as though in mocking

defiance, and pretending to be wounded by the dagger he held in his hand. It all happened in the twinkling of an eye, and the curtain came down on a properly murdered Carmen and a not at all repentant Don José! No one had apparently noticed the hitch in the action, and the evening was a complete success. How furious must my discomforted friend have been as we took curtain after curtain together and he was forced to realise by the storms of applause with which the house greeted me, the complete failure of his well-laid plan!

Sometimes a conversational aside on the stage is very helpful, when it is not actuated by the motives which led this tenor to try to wreck my performance. I remember one evening when the situation was saved by a great many whispered remarks exchanged between myself and my partner through the main love scene. The opera in which we were appearing had never been sung before. It was put on as a novelty in the middle of the season and had been in rehearsal only a short time. Unfortunately the tenor had been absent from a number of these rehearsals and was, in consequence, unfamiliar with his part. To add to the confusion, we had never had a dress rehearsal, or a rehearsal

with the scenery in place. By some combination of accidents, the artists, the properties, and the setting had never been on the stage simultaneously, so that when we walked on that first night, the scene was as new to us as to the audience! During such rehearsals as we had had, the stage manager had indicated to us where we would find the various pieces of furniture necessary for the action—a bench on one side where we were to sit, a column at another point, a flight of steps here, a tree there. We had planned our scene in accordance with these indications and by following the directions in the text of the opera. What was our consternation when we found ourselves before the footlights, launched upon the love duet with not a single property in the place where we had been told to expect it. Instead of bench, column, steps and tree, we found ourselves on a terrace outside a castle without a single object to diversify the scene! Yet we could not stand there like graven images warbling at each other in the middle of the stage. There must be some action, some movement. Something must be done instantly!

"Go over and lean against the parapet," I mur-

mured to the bewildered tenor between the phrases of my song.

"Kneel at my feet," I sang a little later, running the words into the text so as not to interrupt the flow of our duet.

"Get up and stand beside me while I sit on the balustrade," came my next stage aside.

"Now take me in your arms," I interpolated into my ditty, being careful to sing the right notes, but blurring my enunciation so only my partner could catch the words. So through the whole scene, by whispered words and phrases sung in this way, we managed to get through the scene with a happy semblance of ease and naturalness!

When the curtain came down on our final embrace, we could not help bursting into laughter; and while my partner congratulated me on my resource in stage directions, I complimented him even more heartily in having so successfully heard and followed my suggestions.

Such accidents as this have often made me wonder how Patti and other singers, who, like herself, have had the courage to refuse to fatigue themselves with rehearsals, have been able to obtain the necessary dramatic effects which the interpretation of

all the leading rôles in opera require. Rehearsals are exceedingly tiring and exhausting, yet it would seem to me almost impossible to get on without them. Patti very rarely went to them and Madame Alboni also avoided them as much as possible.

I met Madame Alboni when she was seventy years old. She was as splendid as ever, singing with as noble and beautiful an organ as in her youth. She had an admirable contralto voice and vocalised like a bird. She sang Rossini's "Aria de la Cenerentola" for us, and when I congratulated her afterwards on the remarkable preservation of her voice, she spoke of this very matter of rehearsals.

"My dear child," she said, "they tire you too much nowadays, with these ordeals. In my youth I very rarely attended rehearsals and it saved me much wear and tear. Remember this," she added with a smile, touching her throat with the tips of her fingers, "what comes out here never goes in again. Don't let them work you to death!"

It was of this charming woman who was large, and, it must be admitted, inclined to *embonpoint,* that the witty and occasionally sharp-tongued Princess de Metternich spoke when she described a singer who "looked like a cow that had swallowed a nightingale!"

CHAPTER XXII

A MONK OF THE ORDER OF THE VEDANTAS

IT has been my good fortune and my joy to know a man who truly "walked with God," a noble being, a saint, a philosopher, and a true friend. His influence upon my spiritual life was profound. He opened up new horizons before me, enlarging and vivifying my religious ideas and ideals, teaching me a broader understanding of truth. My soul will bear him an eternal gratitude.

This extraordinary man was a Hindu monk of the order of the Vedantas. He was called the Swami Vivi Kananda, and was widely known in America for his religious teachings. He was lecturing in Chicago one year when I was there; and as I was at that time greatly depressed in mind and body, I decided to go to him, having seen how greatly he had helped some of my friends.

An appointment was arranged for me, and when I arrived at his house I was immediately ushered into his study. Before going, I had been told not

to speak until he addressed me. When I entered the room, therefore, I stood before him in silence for a moment. He was seated in a noble attitude of meditation, his robe of saffron yellow falling in straight lines to the floor, his head, swathed in a turban, bent forward, his eyes on the ground. After a brief pause, he spoke without looking up.

"My child," he said, "what a troubled atmosphere you have about you! Be calm! It is essential!"

Then in a quiet voice, untroubled and aloof, this man, who did not even know my name, talked to me of my secret problems and anxieties. He spoke of things that I thought were unknown even to my nearest friends. It seemed miraculous, supernatural!

"How do you know all this?" I asked at last. "Who has talked of me to you?"

He looked at me with his quiet smile, as though I were a child who had asked a foolish question.

"No one has talked to me," he answered gently. "Do you think that is necessary? I read in you as in an open book."

Finally it was time for me to leave.

"You must forget—" he said, as I rose. "Become gay and happy again. Build up your health. Do

not dwell in silence upon your sorrows. Transmute your emotions into some form of external expression. Your spiritual health requires it. Your art demands it!"

I left him, deeply impressed by his words and his personality. He seemed to have emptied my brain of all its feverish complexities, and placed there instead his clear and calming thoughts.

I became once again vivacious and cheerful, thanks to the effect of his powerful will. He did not use any of the ordinary hypnotic or mesmeric influences. It was the strength of his character, the purity and intensity of his purpose, that carried conviction. It seemed to me, when I came to know him better, that he lulled one's chaotic thoughts into a state of peaceful quiescence, so that one could give complete and undivided attention to his words.

He often spoke in parables, answering our questions or making his point clear by means of a poetic analogy. One day we were discussing immortality and the survival of individual characteristics. He was expounding his belief in reincarnation, which was a fundamental part of his teaching.

"I cannot bear the idea!" I exclaimed. "I cling

to my individuality, unimportant as it may be! I don't want to be absorbed into an Eternal Unity! The mere thought is terrible to me!"

"One day a drop of water fell into the vast ocean," the Swami answered. "When it found itself there, it began to weep and complain, just as you are doing. The great ocean laughed at the drop of water. 'Why do you weep?' it asked. 'I do not understand. When you join me, you join all your brothers and sisters, the other drops of water of which I am made. You become the ocean itself! If you wish to leave me, you have only to rise up on a sunbeam into the clouds. From there you can descend again, little drop of water, a blessing and a benediction to the thirsty earth.' "

With the Swami and some of his friends and followers, I went upon a most remarkable trip, through Turkey, Egypt and Greece. Our party included the Swami, Father Hyacinthe Loyson, his wife, a Bostonian, Miss McL. of Chicago, ardent Swamist and charming, enthusiastic woman, and myself, the song bird of the troupe.

What a pilgrimage it was! Science, philosophy and history had no secrets from the Swami. I lis-

tened with all my ears to the wise and learned discourse that went on around me. I did not attempt to join in their arguments, but I sang on all occasions, as is my custom. The Swami would discuss all sorts of questions with Father Loyson, who was a scholar and a theologian of repute. It was interesting to see that the Swami was able to give the exact text of a document, the date of a church council, when Father Loyson himself was not certain.

"Where did you acquire all this information?" we asked him one day.

"In the Upanishads," he answered. "This book, the Book of the Vedas, has been written by our monks, generation after generation, for the last ten thousand years. Each Swami of our order writes the history of his life, setting down everything he knows, his experiences, his studies, his scientific experiments. After his death, the book is read and corrected by the wisest men among us. All repetitions and uninteresting material are eliminated. Sometimes one line of a man's book is kept, sometimes a page. Once in a while, though very rarely, a whole book remains and is incorporated into the Upanishads. We have, in consequence, an extraor-

dinary library, which probably cannot be equalled anywhere in the world. Everything that I know comes from there."

When we were in Greece, we visited Eleusis. He explained its mysteries to us, and led us from altar to altar, from temple to temple, describing the processions that were held in each place, intoning the ancient prayers, showing us the priestly rites.

Later, in Egypt, one unforgettable night, he led us again into the past, speaking to us in mystic, moving words, under the shadow of the silent Sphinx.

The Swami was always absorbingly interesting, even under ordinary conditions. He fascinated his hearers with his magic tongue. Again and again, we would miss our train, sitting calmly in a station waiting room, enthralled by his discourse and quite oblivious to the lapse of time. Even Miss McL., the most sensible among us, would forget the hour, and we would in consequence find ourselves stranded far from our destination, at the most inconvenient times and places!

One day we lost our way in Cairo. I suppose we had been talking too intently! At any rate, we

found ourselves in a squalid, ill-smelling street, where half-clad women lolled from windows and sprawled on doorsteps.

The Swami noticed nothing until a particularly noisy group of women on a bench in the shadow of a dilapidated building began laughing and calling to him. One of the ladies of our party tried to hurry us along, but the Swami detached himself gently from our group and approached the women on the bench.

"Poor children!" he said. "Poor creatures! They have put their divinity in their beauty. Look at them now!"

He began to weep, as Jesus might have done before the woman taken in adultery.

The women were silenced and abashed. One of them leaned forward and kissed the hem of his robe, murmuring brokenly in Spanish, *"Hombre de dios, hombre de dios!"* (Man of God!) The other, with a sudden gesture of modesty and fear, threw her arm in front of her face, as though she would screen her shrinking soul from those pure eyes.

This marvellous journey proved to be almost the last occasion on which I was to see the Swami. Shortly afterward he announced that he was to re-

turn to his own country. He felt that his end was approaching, and he wished to go back to the community of which he was director and where he had spent his youth.

A year later we heard that he had died, after writing the book of his life, not one page of which was destroyed. He passed away in the state called Samadhi, which means, in Sanscrit, to die voluntarily, from a "will to die," without accident or sickness, saying to his disciples, "I will die on such a day."

Years later, when I was travelling in India, I wished to visit the convent where the Swami had spent his last days. His mother took me there. I saw the beautiful marble tomb that one of his American friends, Mrs. Leggett, had erected over his grave. I noticed that there was no name upon it. I asked his brother, who was a monk in the same Order, the reason of this omission. He looked at me in astonishment, and, with a noble gesture that I remember to this day,

"He has passed on," he answered.

The Vedantas believe that they have preserved, in its original purity and simplicity, the teachings of Buddha. They have no temples, saying their

prayers in a simple oratory, with no symbolic figures or pictures to stimulate their piety. In one corner of this place is a small statue of Buddha, as though they wished to say, "It is from him that we have learned the way." Their prayers are all addressed to the Unknown God.

"Oh Thou who hast no name! O Thou whom none dare name! O Thou the Great Unknown!" they say in their supplications.

The Swami taught me a sort of respiratory prayer. He used to say that the forces of the deity, being spread everywhere throughout the ether, could be received into the body through the indrawn breath.

The monks of the Swami's brotherhood received us with simple, kindly hospitality. They offered us flowers and fruits, spreading a table for us on the lawn beneath a welcome shade. At our feet the mighty Ganges flowed. Musicians played to us on strange instruments, weird, plaintive chants that touched the very heart. A poet improvised a melancholy recitative in praise of the departed Swami. The afternoon passed in a peaceful, contemplative calm.

The hours that I spent with these gentle philosophers have remained in my memory as a time apart. These beings, pure, beautiful and remote, seemed to belong to another universe, a better and wiser world.

CHAPTER XXIII

MISTRAL

BY birth, heredity and early association, I am a true Daughter of the South, and I have therefore always been an ardent admirer and follower of our great Provençal poet, Frédéric Mistral. He it was who gave me the device which I have used for many years, and which I have placed at the beginning of this book. He told me that it was the motto of a troubadour of old, and that he had selected it as being particularly appropriate for me.

I leave it in French, for it loses much of its poetry and rhythm when translated into English. The meaning is quite obvious: the singer charms his sorrow with his song, or, as the immortal Shakespeare has expressed it:

> In sweet music is such art,
> Killing care and grief at heart
> *Qui chante son mal enchante.*

Mistral, the poet of the Midi, might be described as the Homer of his country. He was the outstand-

ing figure, the genius, the leader, of that group of poets, who, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, brought about a renaissance of literature and art in Southern France. Unfortunately, very few, even among French people, can know the full beauty of his verse, for he wrote in Provençal, that rich and sonorous language which was the speech of troubadours and kings. All the rulers of France, during the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, used the *langue d'oc,* as the speech of Provence is called, before it was supplanted by the harsher language of the north.

One of the most beautiful of Mistral's epic poems, "Mireille," personifying the romantic and exalted soul of Provence, was put to music by Gounod, and the leading rôle created by Madame Carvalho. The serenade, "O Magali!" from this opera, is an exquisite love song, one of the most popular and widely known of Mistral's poems. Every shepherd in the Midi is familiar with it. I myself have sung it all over the world. It is to this song that I owe Mistral's dedication: *"Alla piu alta cantarella di Mirèio!"* (To the greatest, the most high singer of Mireille.)

Mistral was adored by all Provence. Indeed, in

his character of poet and leader, he was its uncrowned king. He was one of the founders of the Society of the Félibrige, to which belonged a brilliant galaxy of poets and artists. The annual meeting of this society, or school, was held at Arles. Mistral, presiding at these festivals, splendid and dominant even in his old age, was an unforgettable picture. Around him the poets gathered, and the peasants danced their graceful "farandoles," which so strikingly recall the dances of the Greeks in all their Attic harmony of line and gesture.

Some years before he died, he was present at the unveiling of the statue of himself which stands in the great square of Arles, not far from the museum which he had built and presented to the city. The completion of the statue was made the occasion of a remarkable demonstration of the honour and affection in which the great poet was held, not only in his own country, but all over the world. I was asked to be present; but having just returned to my château at Cabrières from a long and fatiguing tour in America, I refused the invitation.

The night before the event, I was aroused from my sleep at about four o'clock by a vivid dream in

which my father seemed to appear to me and to reproach me for not taking part in the festival in honour of our great poet.

I leaped up instantly and, donning my Arlesian costume, proceeded to arouse the household. Two American ladies were staying with me at the time. Waking them from their sleep, I attempted to disguise them as Provençal women, an almost impossible undertaking, in view of their marked Anglo-Saxon types!

I left for Arles in a state of exaltation impossible to describe. I felt as though I were being impelled by an irresistible force. It seemed to me that I was one with all my people; that into my soul had been poured the souls of my forebears—my clan; that my heart throbbed with the beating of a thousand hearts! I longed to give wings to the motor that carried us down into the sunny plains of Provence.

We arrived at Arles about midday, just as the distinguished company of guests and visitors was preparing to leave the platform in front of the town hall, where the ceremonies had taken place. The square was packed tight with an attentive

crowd impossible to move or to penetrate. No one would make way for us or let us pass. Standing on the outskirts of that indifferent throng, I started to sing "O Magali!"—dear to all Provençal hearts.

As though by magic, a pathway opened up before me, and I walked triumphantly to the platform, singing all the way. Once there, standing beside our beloved poet, and looking out over the sea of upturned faces, I sang, with a complete and joyous abandon, all the Provençal songs that I knew. The crowd, responsive, vibrant, took up the choruses. I was exalted, carried out of myself! I longed to fill the whole world with my song!

At last, my strength exhausted, I stopped. Mistral approached me. His words, spoken in the warm language of the South, sounded like a benediction, a song.

"You came down from the mountains like a torrent, with all your mighty race! The strength and the gladness of your people are yours on this day. The crowds parted to let you pass, swept back by the fire of your oncoming, your voice a sword, a leaping flame!"

Never shall I forget that day of days. Every country, every king and queen, had sent a poet or a representative. Every nation paid its homage to the poet of Provence. The French government alone was not officially represented, but the heart of France was there!

CHAPTER XXIV

AROUND THE WORLD

JEAN RICHEPIN, whom it is my privilege to count among my friends, has always said that I was an incorrigible globe-trotter. Indeed, he is right! I adore travelling. I love to see new sights, new countries, to study the customs of all the different peoples of the world. I am fortunate, in that my profession has permitted me to indulge this taste! I used to dream of singing in every country of the world, and as a matter of fact I have very nearly carried out this programme. I have sung in India, China, Japan, Hawaii, countries in which very few of my colleagues had been heard, up to the time of my visit.

By way of realising my dream, I accepted an engagement for Australia in 1910. I started on my long tour which was to take me entirely around the globe in March of that year. We sailed from Marseilles one lovely spring day, aboard a luxurious steamer of the Peninsular-Orientale Line.

Our first objective was Perth, in Australia, and from there we toured through all the principal cities of the country. Our reception everywhere was enthusiastic. At Melbourne my local manager greeted me with the news that he had made arrangements for a reception so that the people could have the opportunity of welcoming me properly. The city was plastered with announcements a yard high:

COME TO THE RECEPTION
TO WELCOME THE GREAT SINGER
EMMA CALVÉ
JUST ARRIVED FROM EUROPE!

When the day came, I was conducted to a hall where I expected to find not more than a couple of hundred people. What was my alarm when I found myself in a huge, barnlike place, where at least four thousand of Melbourne's citizens had gathered to greet me!

After visiting Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane, Wellington, Christchurch, etc., we returned to Singapore and Colombo. I sang in those two places and then proceeded on a long tour through India, visiting Madras, Calcutta, Darjiling, Delhi,

Agra, Bombay. In all these cities there were, of course, a number of English people in our audiences, as well as the native Indian maharajahs and their families. It was during this journey in India that I went to the monastery of the Swami and saw his tomb, and was received by the monks of his Order.

After visiting Burma, the city of Rangoon and the famous Hill of the Thousand Buddhas, we went on to China, where I had the amusing experience of calling upon a distinguished mandarin of Canton, to whom I had a letter of introduction.

One day I was invited to sing for him at his house. He was a very important personage, and I was duly impressed by the honour! I took an interpreter with me, and sang some French songs for my noble host. My first song was "L'air du Cosaque," by Munuvoska. He listened with the most serious and profound attention. When I had finished, the interpreter explained the theme of my song to him.

"Do you mean to say," he commented at last, "that the lady is singing and acting the death of a soldier? Why, then, does she remain beautiful? Dying is not beautiful, but terrible! Our actors

become as hideous as death itself, when they interpret such parts."

I explained, through the interpreter, that in Europe many consider the sublimation of nature to be the highest expression of art.

"We have passed through that phase," he answered. "When physical beauty is admired above all other manifestations, then is a country on the verge of decadence. Consider the teachings of history! We ourselves have gone on to more fundamental truths."

The "Mysoli," which I then sang, seemed to please him better. He was fascinated by its trills and roulades.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "This is lovely! It sounds exactly like a bird! It is delicious, and it is very difficult as well. I do not believe that our artists could do it with such perfection!"

The greatest impression that I made on him, however, was neither by my dramatic nor my musical ability. Unexpected success! It was the force of my lungs that astonished him more than anything else.

"These Occidental women!" he exclaimed to the interpreter. "What marvellous lung-power they

have! What strength, what force! It is splendid!"

I was decidedly mortified. After all my efforts, this was all he could find to praise!

As I was saying my adieux, my host asked me to come the next day, that I might see a Chinese actor perform according to the artistic canons of the Orient. The mandarin promised to secure the very best actor in Canton, and I returned the next day to his house, full of curiosity and interest.

The actor was dressed as a woman, for it is rare to find women on the Chinese stage. He carried a wand in his right hand, with which he controlled the movements of a small orchestra. The musicians, who played on curious wooden instruments, were hidden in the wings and could not be seen from the audience. At a signal from the stage, the rhythmic throbbing stopped.

The actor then began a recitative, half sung, half spoken, punctuated by deep, guttural cries, more like the sound of an animal in pain than a human voice. While he chanted his dismal story, he twisted himself into such extraordinary attitudes and made such hideous faces that I was suddenly overcome with laughter. I hid my face in my handkerchief, in a paroxysm of mirth.

"Tell my host that I am crying!" I whispered to the interpreter. "Tell him that I am ill! Anything so that he will not notice my laughter!"

The actor became more and more violent. He imitated the voice of a child, the voice of a woman, the gasps of a dying man. It was extremely realistic, but the result was more grotesque than impressive. The mandarin, hearing my strangled giggles, was very much pleased.

"How sensitive she is!" he murmured. "How deeply moved! It is pitiful!"

I managed to recover my dignity in time to make my exit from my host's presence with proper ceremoniousness and with many expressions of admiration. But with all respect to the art of the Orient, and with due modesty for my own shortcomings, I would not wish to become a student of their methods!

From Shanghai we sailed for Japan. I shall not attempt to describe the countries we traversed on our long journey, the marvellous scenery, the beauties of art and architecture, which met our eyes on every side. All this has been done much better than I myself could do it, by many great travellers and writers. It is enough to say that, for me, the sight

of those distant and wonderful countries was infinitely more marvellous than anything my imagination had created. Every step of the way was fascinating, and my memory is a rich storehouse of beautiful, colourful and gorgeous scenes.

In Japan we gave concerts at Kioto, the ancient, and Tokio, the modern capital of the country. Near Nagasaki, I had the interesting experience of living for over two weeks in a Japanese family to which I had been introduced by one of my American friends. The head of the family was a Buddhist priest who, with his sister and his sister's children, lived within the confines of the ancient temple which he served. His sister offered me the hospitality of a real Japanese house. My room was simply furnished with a mat and one or two cushions. In one corner of it stood a low tea table. That was all! At night, I was given some larger cushions over which, as a concession to my western habits, linen sheets were spread. The paper screens were drawn together, and I was *chez moi!*

I attended all the ceremonies in the temple and learned much of the religion and philosophy of these wise and highly cultured people. The nieces of the priest spoke French and used to come to me

every morning with flowers and gifts. They taught me how to "compose" a bouquet and to express an idea or a sentiment with one or two flowers carefully arranged. A certain blossom placed in a given relation to another meant a definite phrase. These young girls were able to paint their poets' verses in the fragrant colours of the flowers!

Each morning they brought me the bibelot or ornament which was to grace my room for that day. Sometimes it was a figure of Buddha, made many thousand years ago; sometimes a lovely vase or a gorgeous bit of carved jade. They would place it carefully on my table, and we would admire it from every angle. Once they showed me the storeroom where all their treasures were kept.

"Why do you hide away all these beauties?" I exclaimed. "They could be put in every room of the house, so that you could enjoy them all the time!"

"What a horrible idea!" they answered. "Positively barbarous! How dreadful to have all these things around us! In the first place, it would be unhealthy. But most of all, we would soon become so accustomed to them that we would cease to enjoy or even to see them. Isn't it much better to

take them out one at a time, to study them individually and appreciate all their delicate beauty and charm? That is the only way you can really enjoy a work of art!"

What an unforgettable spring that was, when the cold broke and the cherry-blossom time arrived! I hated to leave that flowering land.

We had to go on, however, and so we sailed from Yokohama for San Francisco on the *Chiomaru,* which was later torpedoed by the Germans when it was in the service of the United States. Our steamer was scheduled to stop at Honolulu on the way. Although this city was not on our itinerary, our friends urged us to inform the manager of the opera house there that we were coming, and that we might be able to give a concert if it was desired. Accordingly, I dispatched a telegram by wireless, and received a prompt and enthusiastic reply.

When we arrived in the harbour of Honolulu, we beheld a fleet of little balloons floating over the city, to each one of which was attached a large picture of myself! It was a most amusing effect, to see one's image suspended in mid-air in this way! The manager met us at the dock, in an automobile piled high with flowers. They have a very delight-

ful way of receiving strangers who set foot for the first time on this sunny isle. As you arrive and as you leave, you are crowned with sweet-smelling wreaths of yellow jasmine, and you are supposed to throw these garlands, as an offering, into the sea before you go. I was almost smothered that day, as wreath after wreath was thrown over my head, until my face disappeared and I could hardly breathe through the mass of odorous blossoms.

We gave not one but three concerts during our brief stay, so enthusiastic and cordial were the audiences. Indeed, I have never been in so enchanting a city. The atmosphere is delicious, soft, glowing and luminous. It is never too hot or too cold—an eternal June, broken only by the two or three rainy months when the inhabitants remain in their houses, never going out at all until the weather clears again. On this island in the mid-Pacific, the air is so light, so clear and fresh, that it is as stimulating as champagne, and fills you with exhilaration and delight. The native women are beautiful, and the music, the songs, and the dances of the country extraordinarily fascinating.

I went often to visit the huge aquarium, which is one of the wonders of the place. On account of the

coral formations that surround these islands, the fauna and flora of the sea are astoundingly variegated and beautiful. As one walks through the halls of the aquarium, one wonders whether these marvelous creations are birds, fish or flowers. Every colour, shade and shape are seen in those opalescent depths, fishes that look like birds of paradise, growths that resemble the horrible dragon of fairy tales. It is a fascinating place, alive with the wonder and mystery of the deep.

The houses of the island are almost all surrounded by huge gardens filled with many kinds of flowers, whose mingled odours perfume the warm air. Of all the countries that I saw on my long journey, from the point of view of natural beauties, Hawaii stands out as the most admirable.

After a few days, all too brief, on this island paradise, we left for California, New York and home! We landed in France after nineteen months of absence. We had been about 150 days at sea, and had experienced all kinds of weather, from monsoons in the Indian Ocean, through dreadful storms off the coast of Australia, to a small typhoon in the unpeaceful Pacific.

When I reached Paris, my eyes were troubling

me very much. I went to one of the best oculists in town to ask his advice.

"What do you expect?" he asked. "Of course your eyes are tired! You have seen more in the last few months than I in all my seventy years!"

CHAPTER XXV

DURING THE GREAT WAR

IN 1915 and 1916 I went again to America, and sang in over forty concerts for the benefit of the Lafayette Fund and other war organisations. One night, in June, 1916, I sang at the Bazar des Allies in New York. There must have been ten thousand people in the great hall of the Armory. A platform had been built in one corner, and the orchestra and chorus of the Metropolitan Opera House were engaged to accompany me. I remember that the platform was very high and that I had to climb up to it on a ladder—a rather alarming proceeding!

As I looked out over that mass of people, I was deeply moved. Never before had I sung for such an assembly. I was almost frightened, but, summoning my courage, I began the "Marseillaise." The refrain was supposed to be taken up by the opera chorus, but suddenly the whole huge audience burst into thunderous song. The throbbing tides of

sound, imprisoned under the glass dome, broke over me in crashing waves. I rocked like a tree beaten upon by mighty winds. It was tremendous, awful —the most overwhelming emotion I have ever experienced! I burst into tears.

The people around me were weeping, too. I looked at them in despair.

"What shall we do, now?" I exclaimed. "How are we to sing in this condition?"

The second stanza was about to begin. I thought of Rachel, the great tragedian, who used to kneel when she recited the "Marseillaise." I followed her example, and sang the final stanzas as though in ardent and impassioned prayer. My voice was broken with tears, but I was so exalted, so filled with flaming patriotism, that I truly believe I have never sung the battle hymn of France as I did that night!

The crowd surged forward. I was lifted up and carried in triumph through a cheering, frantic multitude. Some one put a poilu's steel helmet in my hands. I held it out, a suppliant for my country.

"Pour la France!" I cried.

The improvised alms plate filled and filled again, as fast as I could empty it. It was as though the

CALVÉ SINGING THE "MARSEILLAISE"

Horn of Plenty were pouring its inexhaustible flood into my hands.

What a generous, what a magnificent people! I cannot think of that evening without a glow of gratitude toward the audience which, in a single burst of enthusiasm and sympathy, gave the fabulous sum of one hundred thousand dollars for the war sufferers of France.

In Aveyron, as in other parts of France during the war, the peasant women were admirable. They took the place of the men who were called to the front, shouldering the tasks of husband, father or brother, working morning and night, so that the land should not be neglected.

The wives of my two farmers, in spite of the fact that they each had five or six children, managed to run the farm as usual. They tilled the soil, gathered the grapes, harvested the grain; no task was too heavy or too arduous. Their children helped them. Not a hand was idle.

One day I met the six-year-old daughter of one of these women on the highway below Cabrières. She was driving a herd of cattle toward the farmyard. I wondered why they obeyed her, so diminu-

tive, so fragile did she seem in comparison with their lumbering bulk. In her two hands she held, clasped tightly, a huge whip, twice her size. Her face was solemn and intent. She walked slowly.

"Fantoune," I said, "why don't you choose a smaller stick? You will get all tired out carrying that heavy thing around with you!"

She drew herself up to the limit of her small stature.

"It is my father's whip!" she answered, with the pride a princess would have used in speaking of her royal parent's sceptre.

I tried one year during the spring planting to help the women in the fields. I sowed a corner of the wheatfield, walking over the newly ploughed land, flinging the grain with the swinging immemorial gesture I had so often watched. But my hand was too generous. When the harvest season came, the farmer's wife showed me the field I had planted. The wheat had grown up thick and close together and then fallen to the ground of its own weight.

"Ah, Madame," the old woman murmured reproachfully. "Look how carelessly you threw away the bread of the *bon Dieu!* It's a great sin! All

the same," she added, as though to soften the harshness of her verdict, "you show a certain aptitude! You might learn in time!"

I do not know whether I was any better as a nurse than as a farmer. At any rate, I did what I could and served a certain length of time in the hospitals. It is all so terrible, so cruel a memory, that even now I cannot bear to dwell upon it. Every one who has touched even remotely the horror of those white wards, the suffering and the agony of those dark days, will understand my unwillingness to recall those ghastly scenes.

Once I was directed to wash the feet of a poor boy who had been brought down from the front and had not yet been cared for. I took off his shoe and stocking together. As I did so, I noticed that the shoe was unusually heavy. I glanced at his leg and saw, to my horror, that half of his foot was gone! His feet had been frozen in the trenches, and were already gangrenous. Both legs had to be amputated.

I sang a great deal for the convalescent soldiers. They loved the old French ballads, the folksongs of Brittany and the Pyrenees and of my own part of

the country. One day I was in a hospital that cared for German as well as French wounded. After I had sung several songs to the French soldiers, one of the poilus asked if I would permit the door to be opened into the prisoners' ward.

"The poor fellows in there ought to have the chance of hearing your heavenly voice!" he said.

"No! No!" I exclaimed. "I could not sing for them! They have hurt us too much!"

The boy looked up in surprise. I noticed, for the first time, that his right arm was missing.

"How about me?" he asked. "Don't you suppose that they have hurt me, too?"

I was shamed by such generosity, and told the orderly to open the door. I sang, after that, standing on the threshold between the two wards, but I kept my eyes tight shut. I could not bring myself to look at them!

Of all the terrible suffering brought by the war—loss of limbs, permanent and ghastly injuries, broken lives—nothing is to me more pitiful than the fate of the men blinded in battle. What an inexpressible calamity, to lose the joy of seeing, to be shut up forever in a formless void!

Every effort made to alleviate the condition of

these unfortunate men interested me greatly. The various departments of France had each its special organisation devoted to their care. Industries were created for their benefit, and they were taught to make all sorts of articles where skill of fingers could replace the use of eyes.

One day I had been singing in a hospital for the blind in my own department. Before I left I stood for a while in the courtyard, watching the men at their recreation. I was struck anew by the contrast between the vigour of their bodies and the awkward, hesitating manner in which they moved and tried to play. There they were, young men in the prime of life, healthy, strong, but cut off forever from the comforts and consolations of a normal life, the companionship of wives and the love of children.

"Why should they not marry?" I thought, as I watched them. "Surely, there are women who would be glad to love and care for these poor boys!"

Suddenly I recalled a conversation I had had a few days previous, with a friend who was the directress of a home for orphaned and abandoned girls. This organisation cared for children who

would otherwise have died of neglect or starvation —poor little things left on church steps, or found wandering in the streets at a tender age, without parents, relatives or friends. When they grew up, they were given a "dot" or marriage portion by the orphanage, and this enabled them to marry and become happy and independent wives and mothers.

My friend had told me that there was a pathetic side to the situation. The ugly girls rarely found husbands, no matter how fine and worthy they might be, while the pretty girls were married off without the slightest difficulty. The poor ugly ducklings were left behind, and were extremely unhappy.

With this conversation in mind, I went to the doctor in charge of the hospital and had a long talk with him. Then I called my automobile and flew to the orphan asylum, where I laid my plan before the directress, asking her advice and assistance. She was enthusiastic, and then and there called the girls together, asking me to talk to them.

I found myself facing a group of shy young women, dressed all alike, but showing every variety of beauty and charm. I do not know exactly what I said, but in my heart was the picture of that

sunny courtyard filled with splendid youth to whom all the glory of the midday sun could bring no ray of colour or of light. I described the solitude, the loneliness, of these poor boys. I pointed out that the very infirmity which crippled them would make them better and more loyal husbands.

"Think of it!" I exclaimed. "These men will not see the companion of their lives grow old and ugly! The woman who is big-hearted enough to marry a blind man will always remain the glorious vision of youth and beauty that his grateful imagination paints her!"

One of the girls rose from her seat. She was plain, dark, unprepossessing, but her eyes shone with intelligence, and she was deeply moved.

"I am ready!" she exclaimed, and, indifferent to the whisperings and nudgings of her companions, she put on her hat and cloak and came with me.

She did not speak until we had almost reached the gate of the hospital. Then she turned to me.

"Let me choose him," she said, "for I, at any rate, shall see him all my life!"

The men were still out of doors when we arrived. As we walked toward the main entrance, the girl caught my arm.

"That one!" she cried excitedly, pointing out a tall fellow who was lounging against the wall on the opposite side of the court. "That is the one I want!" She had picked out the handsomest of the lot, in the few seconds that it took to cross the courtyard!

I led her to him and put his hand in hers.

"Here is a young girl who will take you for a walk," I said, as I presented them to each other. "Go, my children, and God bless you!"

An hour later they returned. It had not taken them long to reach an understanding.

"He is splendid!" the girl murmured, shyly.

The blind boy, his face lit with a new wonder and delight, groped for my hand.

"Thank you, thank you, madame," he said, and then, carried away by his enthusiasm, "she's a wonder!" he exclaimed. "Such a talker, and what a fine figure of a woman!"

A year later, I visited them in the little home where they had settled after their marriage. A charming scene greeted me as I came into the yard of the farmhouse.

It was again one of those gorgeous days that are the joy of southern France. In the warmest cor-

ner of the court, the blind man sat on a bench against the wall. In his arms a naked, rosy baby kicked and wriggled with delight. Near by, the mother was at work, preparing the baby's cradle.

The father played with the child, touching it with delicate, sensitive fingers, feeling the soft hair on its head, following the contours of the little body with his hands. His face was transfigured with joy. A solemn ecstasy seemed to radiate from him.

His wife saw me and hurried to greet me. We stood for a while talking. I could see that something troubled her. The unclouded bliss of that absorbed blind face was not hers. Finally, she drew me out of earshot and poured out her anxiety.

"I am ashamed to lie to him!" she exclaimed. "He thinks I am beautiful. I, who am as ugly as a witch! He thinks my hair is golden, my eyes blue. I, who am as brown as a nut! Yet, if I tell him the truth, he will not love me any more! Oh, madame, madame! What shall I do?"

I comforted her and reassured her. Looking at the scene before me, I knew there was no danger.

"Tell him the truth, my child," I answered. "You need have no fear. Put your son into his arms, and he will find no fault in you. All will be well!"

CHAPTER XXVI

A NEST OF YOUNG SONG BIRDS

EVERY summer during recent years I have filled my castle on the hill top with different groups of young girls who have come to study with me. It is a joy to me to have these young people about, to hear their fresh voices, to try to help them a little in acquiring a knowledge of the difficult arts of singing and of living.

Both at Cabrières and in Paris, where I teach during part of the year, I have had pupils from every quarter of the globe: Russians, with their fiery temperament and unstable emotions; Italians, warm and gay, bubbling and happy on the least occasion; repressed English girls, with their perfect manners and calm exterior; French girls, charming and serious, eager to learn and ready to work hard; and, of course, my dear Americans, with their cordial, spontaneous friendliness, their splendid physical equipment, beautiful voices and simple, unsophisticated outlook. My pupils come to me from

every walk of life, in every stage of musical development. Some of them have no other recommendation than the beauty of their natural, untrained voices. There are others, again, who after years of study wish to develop some particular side of their talent, diction, dramatic expression, lyric declamation—any of the hundred special phases of a singer's art.

Whenever it is possible, I take these young girls into my own home at Cabrières. What happy, busy summers we pass among my beautiful mountains, in the high solitude of my well-beloved country! There, far from the world, its cares and distractions forgotten, with nothing to claim our attention outside the simple routine of our daily lives, studying becomes a pastime! My pupils learn almost unconsciously, and we are able to devote our whole attention to our work, without fatigue or strain.

Cabrières itself is ideally situated for a singer s holiday. The air in these high places is dry and bracing—a splendid climate for those whose throats and lungs are their kingdom. My young girls benefit greatly by their summer in the country—a real *cure d'air* for those who come from cities or

from damp, low regions. I can take care of a number of pupils in my little castle, and they share with me the comfortable, wholesome country life that I love so much. Our daily routine is simplicity itself. We rise early and dispatch our small domestic duties, for here at Cabrières we live upon a democratic plane. Rich or poor, luxuriously nurtured or hard working—all are alike under this roof. At ten o'clock we assemble for lessons and work hard until lunch time. In the afternoon we take our pleasure. Some go swimming in the river near by; others take long walks among the hills. On fête days, or when the spirit of adventure seizes us, we go off for long excursions into the surrounding countryside in the automobile. Motoring is a delight in this part of the world, for the roads are so built that one can reach a fairly great altitude without strain. In the evening, we have our books, letters to write, long talks by the fireside, an impromptu lesson or two. Indeed, the whole day is full of movement and song, for I and my little troupe are happy at Cabrières, and we sing as easily as we walk or talk!

The distinguished writer, Bonnier, has published such an excellent treatise on the art of singing and

voice production that there remains little to be said on this most interesting and much disputed subject. In reading his book recently, I came across a remark which struck me as particularly appropriate in connection with my school at Cabrières. Bonnier says in effect that "those who have had long experience as singers, even if their achievement may not have been more than mediocre, are alone among mortals the custodians of a little secret. The secret of the voice! They alone are able to transmit this secret to the uninitiated. Only a singer can teach the art of singing, only a vocalist can train the voice!"

Even among the birds is this true! If a young nightingale is separated from his kind, he sings but poorly and imperfectly. Should he be placed, while he is still a fledgling, in a cage of sparrows, he would chirp as shrilly as do they! In order to learn the full use of his voice, he must be brought up with his own kind. He must listen constantly to the limpid notes of the full-grown birds about him, which he will soon strive to emulate and may in the end be able to surpass.

Yet, though this may seem an almost self-evident truth, it is curious and sometimes absurd to

note that among those who undertake to teach the difficult art of singing will be found pianists, theatre managers, professors of solfège, teachers of pantomime, ladies in reduced circumstances, even ex-chorus women. I know of one instance where the lady's maid of a famous opera star has become a teacher of singing, and, incidentally, has made a very good business of it!

However successful these unmusical teachers of singing may be in acquiring pupils, it is, nevertheless, undeniable that the true way to teach singing is through the ear. To learn to sing, the pupil should listen, as does the young nightingale, to the voice of his master. He should be able to imitate the sounds made by his master, and this is possible only when his teacher is a singer. The master, in addition, must be able to lend the accuracy of his musician's ear, trained by long years of experience, to guide the first steps of the young aspirant. Musical judgment, vocal understanding is only gained by long practice and hard work. It cannot be acquired off-hand by any short cuts to success.

In the equipment of a singing teacher, a certain amount of scientific knowledge is essential. Unless he understands physiology and anatomy, he may

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fall into very grave errors. These important subjects have always been very carefully studied by the best masters. Was it not a singer, Manuel Garcia, who first made use of the autolaryngoscope? His apparatus was later modified by two other doctor-singers, Bataille and Segond.

Teaching must be based on accurate and intelligent knowledge of the mechanism of the body, particularly of the head, throat and lungs; for, though such knowledge will not make a great singer, yet ignorance may ruin a good one! How much harm can be done by inexperienced teachers and careless methods! Knowledge, actual experience, attention to detail, and endless patience—these are but a few of the qualities needed by those who undertake the training of a singer!

Standards and types of singing vary from period to period. In the past, much emphasis was placed upon pure vocalisation, *bel canto,* the perfect, even production of each note. This method sometimes developed into pure vocal gymnastics. It might almost be said that at this period the singer *sang* too much; that he did not pay enough attention to diction and declamation. Now, on the contrary, with the introduction of a new type of music, less

rich in opportunity for vocal fireworks, the singer might be accused of placing too much emphasis on declamation. He does not sing enough! A happy medium between these two extremes is the ideal achievement. It is not enough for a singer to be merely a virtuoso. He must, in addition, be an artist.

I try to teach my pupils at Cabrières something beside the pure technique of their profession. An artist worthy of that high title must not only have a complete command of his instrument. He must not only have a mastery of the difficult arts of diction, breath control, declamation, tone production, the colouration of tones—in fact, of everything that might be called the mechanical side of singing. He must also, and above all, possess a high intelligence, a well-informed mind, a sensitive and generous heart!

It is not, of course, possible to give these qualities to those who have not got them, any more than one can cultivate a voice that does not exist! On the other hand, just as the hidden qualities of a crude young singer may be brought out and developed by an experienced master, so the young intelligence can be stimulated to greater activity. These

young people can be taught to read intelligently, to study, to think. They can be shown how greatly a well-equipped brain will assist them in their careers. Their minds and souls can be opened to a wider understanding.

It is for this reason that I am always glad to have my pupils stay with me at Cabrières, for there, in a daily and hourly intimacy, I can show them, little by little, the path that will lead toward a broader culture. I cannot, of course, teach them all they need, for I do not pretend to be a pedant or a professor, but I can guide them to the sources of information. I can indicate to them where they can find what they need. I can open their eyes to a hundred avenues of interest and knowledge to which many of them are blind.

I am often astonished at the ignorance, the extraordinary limitation, of some of the young people I know. The past is a closed book to them. Philosophy, psychology, the teachings of the great leaders, past and present, are entirely outside the field of their attention. I wonder sometimes how these young people have the courage to undertake an artistic career, with such an utter ignorance of what has been accomplished before them, with so

little intellectual understanding of the problems they will have to meet and solve.

"Who was La Malibran?" they ask, when I speak of that great cantatrice to whom de Musset wrote his famous lines.

"Who was Madame Carvalho?"

"Was Rachel an opera singer?"

"What is talent?"

I do not remember half the amusing and absurd questions I have been asked—questions that show a complete ignorance of the background of information that is so extremely important for an artist to have. But I cannot blame these young girls for their shortcomings, when I consider how many artists, even among those who have achieved a certain recognition, are equally ignorant and uninformed. As a group, musicians have often been accused of being limited in their outlook and lacking in general culture. An incident comes to my mind which bears out this accusation only too well.

The barytone who sang Escamillo, the bull fighter, in one of the early productions of "Carmen," was one of those singers whose power of lungs far surpassed his intellectual grasp of his rôle. It was noticed by those who watched the

rehearsals of the opera that he stalked through his last scenes in a most tragic and solemn manner. At the moment in the opera when the Toreador has won the love of Carmen and is full of confidence of his approaching victory in the arena, the dejected and unhappy demeanour of the singer was particularly absurd.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Carvalho, who was directing the rehearsal. "Why are you so gloomy? Don't you know this is a gay, triumphant scene?"

The singer drew himself up with supreme dignity.

"I always make my interpretation in accordance with the words," he answered haughtily. "Does it not say, 'Toreador, beware. A black eye is watching you?' "

"Yes, yes! Certainly!" agreed Carvalho. "But I don't see why that should make you unhappy. To whose eye do you think the song refers?"

"Whose eye?" exclaimed the singer, indignantly. "Am I not supposed to be acting the part of a bull fighter in this opera? Whose eye, indeed! Why, the bull's eye, of course!"

This poor man was unusually dense. Yet it is

Calvé as Messaline

surprising how often almost equally absurd mistakes are made. Such ignorance is a very serious handicap for a singer who wishes to reach a really high goal in the operatic world. No musical aspirant can afford to neglect his general education and studies. No matter how taxing his technical training may be, other studies must be followed at the same time. History, literature, languages—all these are essential to the development of an interesting artistic career.

I have seen musicians who have gained a certain popularity and success through mere technical proficiency. But the really great creative geniuses that I have had the privilege of knowing have all been highly cultivated and intellectual people. I try to make my pupils realise these almost self-evident truths. I show them why, from a perfectly practical point of view, a knowledge of history and costume through the ages is of inestimable value in the interpretation of operatic rôles and even of simple songs.

When, for instance, I was studying a rôle such as that of Messalina in de Lara's opera of that name, I steeped myself in the classic literature that bore on the period. I studied the historic relics of

that epoch of Roman history, and strove to recreate in my mind, not only a picture of the Empress herself but of the background in which she moved.

When Salignac was called upon to act the part of Christ in an opera built upon the story of Mary Magdalene, he purchased photographs of all the paintings by the great masters in which the head of Our Saviour appeared. He procured hundreds of these pictures from many different countries. He read and re-read the New Testament, and absorbed himself so completely in his subject that he was finally able to present a most touching and impressive interpretation of the rôle. It is only by such careful and conscientious studies as these that a singer can hope to lift his achievements above the dead level of mediocrity.

Sometimes in the evenings at Cabrières, we try out the ideas and suggestions we have been discussing during the day.

"Take this song, which originated in the Middle Ages," I sometimes say to one of my pupils. "Sing it for me, and give me your idea of how it should be done."

If she has studied her history well, she will sing the song with the dignity and restraint which it

demands. She will make us feel that she is carrying the tall veil-draped coif of the period. She will hold herself straight and still, as though she were encased in heavy brocaded garments falling stiffly to the floor.

When my pupils are tired of trying these experiments themselves, I take my place beside the piano and, with such art as I have learned through many years of study and practice, I illustrate to them how a whole period or atmosphere can be evoked by an inflexion, a gesture, the delicate shading of a tone, the slightest change in expression of voice or features.

We have many discussions on music and art and on the interpretation of various well-known arias or songs. One evening a friend of mine was present when we were discussing Beethoven. In the course of the conversation I sang one of his marvellous songs, which was greeted by my friend with some displeasure.

"My dear Calvé!" she exclaimed. "You seem to forget that Beethoven is a classic! You sang that song with too much feeling, too much temperament. You should be more restrained!"

"Do you remember what Busoni said on this sub-

ject?" I rejoined. "Surely you will accept the verdict of that distinguished musician, even if you doubt my ability to interpret the master! Busoni said that the classics were killed by respect!"

Indeed, I am convinced that Beethoven and Mozart and the other immortals did not write their masterpieces for the delight of musical pedants and professors of rhythm! It is a great mistake to think that they should be interpreted with systematic coldness and so-called "classic" mannerisms. Beethoven, so tragic, so human! How can any one sing his music coldly?

When we are finally tired of singing and talking, we have lessons in "deportment" and stage bearing. We make experiments in the gentle art of walking across a stage.

What is more expressive than a walk! The swing and swagger of Carmen, the modest forthright steps of Marguerite, the wandering, hesitant stumbling of poor Ophelia, the gay and mincing carriage of the eighteenth-century coquette as she ruffles along in her flowing skirts—each gesture is vividly suggestive of the character portrayed. Grace of carriage, dignity, complete and easy control of every movement are essential to the aspirant

for dramatic laurels. For this reason, outdoor exercise, swimming, walking, everything that tends to develop and strengthen the body, are most valuable.

Singing, study, exercise, fill the days at Cabrières. Nor do we neglect the sister arts. The eye must be trained as well as the ear. A sensitiveness to line and colour should be cultivated as well as an appreciation of literature and poetry. I never fail to take my pupils on one or two excursions to such neighbouring towns and cities as can boast art galleries or museums. We go to Montpellier, to Arles, sometimes as far afield as Italy, whose rich heritage of art is a never-ending source of pleasure and stimulation. It is a keen delight to me to share the fresh enthusiasm of these young girls, to see again through their eyes the marvels of painting and of sculpture, the wonders and delights of the Italian Renaissance.

"You have told us a great many interesting things," a pupil said to me one day. "You have talked of singing, of study, of music, of art and of religion. But which of these many things is most important? What, above all, is necessary in order to become a great singer?"

"My child," I answered, "in order to sing really well, one must believe in God!"

"Ah!" exclaimed my young friend. "That is why you talk to us so often of *le bon Dieu!*"

"Yes," I answered. "That is indeed the reason! I do most sincerely believe that religion is of tremendous and fundamental importance in the life of every individual. The strength, the fire, the flame which transform mere vocalisation into a transcendent, moving force, come to us from a Higher Power. We must keep ourselves in humble communion with that Power if we are to receive its blessing. That is why I say that those who wish to sing with more than average skill must keep their faith pure and strong!"

CHAPTER XXVII

A DAY AT HOME

MY life at Cabrières is, as I have said before, very simple and restful. To me, it is the happiest life in all the world. I have many small duties there that fill the day with lively interest. First of all, there is the farm to run—a responsibility which falls on my shoulders now that my father is no longer there to administer it, as he did so wisely for many years. The farm gives me many early morning cares, as those who have ever struggled with the problems of planting and reaping, of vine culture and wine making, can well understand. I have to rise betimes and go out in to the fresh, cool morning dews to decide on many affairs of importance in consultation with my two faithful farmers.

First of all, however, there is the household to attend to. Quickly, quickly, I fly into my clothes—whatever is at hand. A skirt, a waist, a shawl from "Carmen," a Mexican sombrero! I care little what I put on, for here I am a housekeeper, a farmer,

and the vanities of dress are nothing to me. The results are sometimes absurd, and my friends and pupils laugh at me when I appear in too unprecedented a combination of opera costumes and civilian clothes. But with so many important responsibilities, what is one to do? I cannot stop to prink before the mirror, when important matters such as orders for the week's marketing or the price of a calf have to be attended to!

Before ten, all the important details of the house are dispatched, and I am ready for my pupils, if I have any with me, or for letters and business if I am alone. After lunch I am out again in the fields or the garden. Ah, the garden! It is as great a joy to me now as it was in the days of my childhood. What a delight to keep the terraced spaces green and flowering through the summer season! What pleasure to see some well-planned colour scheme blossom into reality! I still love best of all the old-fashioned flowers that used to delight me in my aunt's garden many years ago; and here in my own borders and plots, I have made them grow again.

The vegetable garden is even more necessary, and almost as interesting! I do not know of which

A Room in the Chateau of Cabrières

The Chateau of Cabrières

I am most proud—my roses or my cabbages! Is there any satisfaction as great as that of seeing one's table spread with the produce of one's own land, the rich reward of generous nature for our care and tending of the soil?

When I am working in my garden, or watching with solicitous eye the gradual ripening of the purple grapes, when I am absorbed in my farm and my country occupations, I forget completely that I have any other life.

"Who is that alien figure that walks and gestures on a painted stage?" I wonder to myself: "Who is that creature clothed in curious garments, a gypsy girl, an empress, or a slave? Is it really I?"

No, rather, this is myself. Here under the wide heavens, in touch with simple, vital things, I am more truly I.

It is the sunset hour. For a moment I stand, looking out over the peaceful plains, watching the heavens glow into incomparable colour. I hear the shepherd boys returning from the distant pastures, driving their sheep before them. The familiar sounds rise in the quiet air—the music of cowbells, the lowing of cattle, the rustle and twitter of birds settling for the night in their nests, and nearer and

ever nearer the voices of the shepherd boys chanting their evening songs.

I take up the refrain, and as my voice rises to the sky, leaping free and joyous toward the many-tinted zenith, I realise that I am, after all, two people! That distant figure moving in a phantom world is indeed myself, for she is singing as I am, only she sings in crowded halls and before huge audiences. The sound of my voice reminds me of that other world from which I have just come and to which I will inevitably return, no matter how much delight I feel in my country freedom and occupations. The great world of cities, of striving and accomplishment, the world where art and music reign, the fascinating centres of thought and culture call me. Indeed, I am two people, for I can enjoy with equal intensity the peace of my hills and the noisy, throbbing vitality of New York.

With my thoughts still occupied with visions of distant places that the sound of my songs has called to my mind, I go into the house and turn to a room which I have kept as a repository of many souvenirs of my artistic life. All my costumes are there, for I have never had the courage to throw any of them away, and so in this room at Cabrières

I have collected a strange group of ghostly lay figures, each dressed in one of the costumes in which I have appeared on the stage.

There they stand, the husks of all my rôles—Carmen, Marguerite, Juliet, Ophelia, La Navarraise, Sappho, Santuzza! These fading rags and ribbons, these chiffons, velvets, tarnished cloth-of-gold, seem to exhale a romantic fragrance. The very atmosphere of the theatre clings to their motionless folds—the dust of the stage, the smell of grease paint, the glare of flaring gas over a disordered dressing table, the heavy perfume of flowers, the orchestra, the footlights, the public, warm and welcoming! I seem to see and feel it all again, as I stand in the gloaming, among the fragile relics of my youth.

Coloured fabrics and the texture of materials have always had a tremendous fascination for me. It is for this reason, perhaps, that my hobby—my *violon d'Ingre,* as we call it in France—is the costuming of dolls. I cannot see a bit of bright ribbon, a scrap of lace, a discarded trifle of adornment, without longing to turn it into a miniature costume.

I have dressed hundreds of dolls, and what fun

it has been! Best of all are the cries of delight from my young friends to whom I have presented them. During the war, I turned this pastime to account for raising money for the wounded. The dolls I dressed were sold for the benefit of war-time organisations. I gave a number to the Lafayette Fund in New York, and they were sold at auction or raffled off. One of them, I was told, brought some four thousand dollars. She was the prize in a lottery at a dollar a ticket, and certainly she earned a noble sum for a good cause!

I have had one regret in the pursuit of this amusement of mine. I have been grieved and horrified at the ugliness of the manufactured dolls. Why, oh why, should they be so hideous, so staring, so inhuman? Especially is this true of the dolls made since the war. They have become even uglier than before. I have often wished that I had a sculptor's art and could model or carve in wood figures as charming, as delicious, as the little statuettes of the eighteenth century. Truly, these figurines are gems of delicate workmanship, full of grace and redolent of the atmosphere of their day.

How delightful it would be if this art were revived! I have often imagined a charming group

of miniature portrait figures which should be made to represent all the leading artists of to-day, clothed in the costumes of their most popular rôles, arranged in appropriate settings and groups. What a fascinating toyland such a collection would make! It would be, at the same time, a most valuable historic record. Our descendants, reading of the great Sarah Bernhardt, would be able to see her tiny effigy, clothed in the costume of Doña Sol in Victor Hugo's "Hernani," or Henry Irving as Hamlet, or Caruso as Pagliacci. In fact, all the leading figures of the era could be thus immortalised. What an interesting and entertaining occupation it would be to create such a museum!

The day is over at Cabrières, and the long evening of uninterrupted quiet is at hand. These are the hours that can be devoted to reading, if the house is not full of pupils or guests. I have read a good deal, on a great variety of subjects. Mysticism, theosophy, everything that pertains to the spiritual life interests me above all else. Since my earliest childhood, I have been deeply religious. My life has brought me into contact with one or two great souls—the Swami Vivi Kananda, of whom I have already spoken, and others whose

teaching and example have meant much in my spiritual development. It is in a deep and sincere religious faith that I have found strength and courage to live through a strenuous and not always happy existence, and to gain in the end a certain peace and security.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

I HAVE often been asked what methods I use to maintain my health and my voice through the long and arduous years of my career. Of my voice, what can I say? It is a mysterious, a heavenly visitor that has deigned to take up its abode with me for a little while. It is a bird, an angel from another world, my little sister! I do not know why it stays with me, except that I have "entreated it" kindly, and that I have tried to be a not too unworthy hostess!

As for my health, I have been blessed with a strong constitution, and, above all, I have always followed the simple and obvious rules of hygiene. When I am singing in opera, I keep to a well-established routine, rising at seven every morning and taking a long walk in the fresh air. On the days that I sing, I eat my principal meal at three o'clock in the afternoon, as do all singers. If I feel very tired in the course of the evening, I

drink a small glass of port or strong coffee and eat a biscuit. After the performance, before going to bed, I drink a cup of bouillon or hot milk. I have always avoided midnight suppers, which I consider extremely unhealthy after a long and fatiguing evening's work.

During my long opera seasons, when I was appearing as often as three times a week, I went to bed at nine o'clock on the nights that I was not singing, and never accepted any invitations for the evening. But I was up the next morning betimes for my daily walk, which I did not omit even on the days that I sang. It is due largely to these long walks, and to the fact that I have always slept with my windows wide open, that my lungs are in such splendid condition to-day. Gymnastics, Swedish massage, and daily exercises are all excellent for maintaining bodily health, and therefore the health of that delicate human instrument—the voice. During the forty years of my musical career, I have been entirely free from illnesses that affect the voice of a singer.

Every one seems to imagine that the life of an opera singer is a continual and glorious fête, a happy existence of pleasure and ease. How far

from the truth is this glittering myth! Even a person as naturally strong and healthy as I, would be a wreck by now had I led anything like the kind of life that we are supposed to indulge in. I could never have survived the strain! Long before this, I would have lost anything I might have had of health, strength or voice.

The layman does not realise at all the amount of work involved in going through a single evening's performance. The tension, nervous, muscular and mental, is extreme. One has to pour out all one's energy and emotion at a given hour, no matter how one feels. The public will not wait! It is the most exacting of taskmasters. In a rôle such as Carmen, I sing, walk, laugh and dance for four solid hours without a moment's pause. The intermissions between the acts are scarcely long enough to permit the necessary changes of costume. There is not a moment's let-up, and it is hard, sustained effort.

Aside from the performances themselves, there are the long hours of study and the endless fatigue of rehearsals. I have practised every single day of my life since I began my musical studies, except, of course, when I have been actually ill. Lilli Leh-

mann practised for three hours even on the days when she was to sing in public. I will admit that I myself have never had the courage to go as far as that. I find that an hour is all that I feel like doing, and I think many will agree with me.

The preparation of a new part requires the most arduous and intense study. Madame Carvalho used to say that, when she had a rôle to create, she would shut herself up in an ivory tower of silence and isolation, living there for weeks and months together. She foreswore all pleasures and amusements, refused all invitations, and remained in absolute retirement until her studies were completed.

I used often to discuss with her the difficulties and problems of an opera singer's life. One day, the conversation turned upon the subject of newspaper criticism and the effect it could have upon an artist's career.

"I myself have always been very sensitive and impressionable," the famous prima donna remarked. "In consequence, my husband never permitted me to read the newspapers. He would occasionally repeat some of the pleasant and complimentary phrases, but he omitted the attacks. I was not duped by this proceeding, but I forced

myself to believe as much as possible, in order to put away from me anything that might diminish my confidence. My husband was too deeply interested in my welfare not to wish my faults corrected. When, therefore, a just criticism was made, he would draw attention himself to my mistakes. Thanks to this arrangement, I have always believed that the world was kind and indulgent toward me.

"One evening at a reception, I met a journalist who had been particularly bitter in his attack on my latest creation. I did not know what he had written, having only been told by my husband that I was to thank him for his article. As soon as I began to express my appreciation of his kindness in writing about me, I noticed his evident distress and embarrassment, and caught the astonished glances of my friends. I realised instantly what had happened.

" 'Do not be alarmed,' I said to him as pleasantly as possible. 'I have never read a single word that you have written. Judging by your agitation, my husband must be quite right in helping me preserve my illusions. My illusions, thank you!' I concluded, making a deep obeisance."

Not every one has been as fortunate as Madame

Carvalho. Many artists have suffered cruelly under the lash of the critics. In some cases, the attitude of the press has had a very bad effect upon a promising career, depressing and discouraging the budding artist, shaking his confidence and lowering his morale. The famous tenor Nourit killed himself in Naples in 1850, because of the brutality of the attacks made upon him by the newspapers. One of the most charming and gifted of my friends, Marguerite Priola, whose lovely voice and unusual talent should have brought her a far different fate, committed suicide as a result of the attitude taken by the critics with regard to her creation of a certain rôle.

Heavens! If I had killed myself each time I was adversely criticised, I would have died a hundred deaths! I read everything; but though certain remarks have hurt me deeply, others have encouraged and rewarded me, and I have found in intelligent criticism much stimulation and food for thought.

CHAPTER XXIX

ART AND SONG

DO I like my profession, my art? I adore it! Would I go on the operatic stage again, had I to begin my life over? Ah, yes, indeed! It is an honourable, a noble calling, if it is lived with dignity and worth.

Though glory may be, as Madame de Staël has said, an empty statue made of bronze, yet it has moments of such intense, such overwhelming joy, that no one who has once experienced them can ever forget. Success, achievement, victory! Of what tremendous, transcendent emotions you are the expression and the cause!

The greatest fascination of success lies, for me, in the periods of exaltation which precede and accompany it. In those moments, it is as though I became a supernormal being. I am no longer alone. I become multiple. The power and strength of many is mine. I am no longer conscious of an individual existence, but I find myself swept along

by a torrential will, demanding expression, pouring itself out in a passionate, unstinted flood.

Sometimes, when I am very tired, I try to save myself. I hold back. The result is disastrous. I feel so diminished, so small, that I cannot bear it. I must throw myself once more into the stream, giving—giving of my strength and energy. It is always the same. The more I spend, the more I have to spend!

What a mysterious thing is "temperament," that combination of qualities, that emanation of personality, which plays so important a part in artistic expression! The word has been overworked to such an extent that it has lost much of its force, especially in English, and yet it expresses an intangible something difficult to describe in any other way and usually essential to a successful dramatic career.

I suppose it is this which carries me so deeply into whatever part I may be acting that I become one with the character I am impersonating. The moment I put on the costume and make-up of Carmen, even I do not recognise myself!

"You are a stranger to us," my mother and brothers used to say. "You are no longer *you!*"

This absorption of one's personality in a rôle requires adaptability, a chameleonlike change of one's whole aspect and being. I have always been fascinated by these changes. I have studied and interpreted the greatest diversity of characters and types, as is proved by the fact that I am probably the only woman who has sung Carmen and Ophelia in the same week—two rôles which are totally dissimilar, both in characterisation and in *tessitura.*

I have already mentioned some of my methods of study in developing the rôle of Carmen. I have described my visit to Granada, and my observation of the gypsies in their homes and at their work in the cigarette factories. The rôle of Ophelia required a more painful investigation. I was determined to understand thoroughly the psychology of the part, and so I discussed Ophelia's character and experiences with an eminent alienist, whose profession had brought him into contact with many similar cases. He described to me in detail the various instances of insanity that had come under his observation. Many of them were of the same type as that to which Ophelia is supposed to have succumbed. One day he asked me whether

I wished to see such a case, assuring me that my visit to the asylum, though it might be distressing to me, would give the poor girl who was confined there a certain amount of pleasure. This unfortunate young woman had lost her reason as a result of a disastrous love affair and was under the care of my friend. I finally decided to go with him and the memory of that visit still remains vividly in my mind. It was heartrending, terrible, yet I believe that I was able to interpret the rôle of Ophelia with greater sympathy and understanding than I could possibly have achieved had I avoided this painful experience. How often, as I acted the mad scene in "Hamlet," have I thought of that poor girl and her pitiful condition.

One of the most interesting things, from the point of view of dramatic interpretation, that I have done was to sing the three Marguerites—that of Gounod's "Faust," of Berlioz' "Damnation de Faust" and of Boïto's "Mefistofele," all in the same season.

I did this at Monte Carlo, where I sang for a number of years, during the season, with Renaud, Tamagno, Chaliapin and many other distinguished artists. It amused me to interpret these three Mar-

guerites in succession, for each one has a strong individuality and character of her own. I brought out the different conceptions of the three composers by my different manner of singing, acting and costuming each part. Gounod's Marguerite is an innocent young girl, simple, naïve and charming. The music is melodious and full of youth and sentiment. Boïto's heroine is very human, more passionate and profound than that of Gounod. Berlioz' creation breathes the atmosphere of the Middle Ages, it is mediæval, romantic in tone and feeling. With the assistance of scenery and costume the differentiation of these characteristics was not as difficult as it would be without these accessories. It had often occurred to me, however, that it might be interesting to attempt this delineation on the concert stage. In one of my recent concerts in New York I made this experiment, singing the three principal arias from these three operas one after the other. There is a fascination in thus evoking on the bare boards of the concert stage the whole atmosphere and individuality of a character, particularly interesting when, as in this case, the heroine portrayed is the same, the differences being entirely in the composer's interpretation of a great poem.

All opera singers who possess, as do I, a very wide range of voice, have had the amusing experience of singing several parts in the same opera. In the case of Marguerite I sang the same character in three different operas! In Mozart's "Noces de Figaro" and in Massenet's "Hérodiade," to mention only the first two that come to my mind, I sang several rôles in the same opera! Massenet's "Hérodiade" was launched in Brussels the year of my début and I sang Hérodias there and later Salomé. During my early years in Brussels and Paris I sang all three soprano parts in "Figaro": Cherubin, Susanna and the Countess.

In my long operatic career I have created a great number, as well as a great variety, of rôles. Some of them like Mascagni's "Amico Fritz," and Massenet's "Sappho" and "La Navarraise" have become part of the repertoires of the leading opera houses all over the world. Others such as "Aben-Hamet," "Le Chevalier Jean," "Flora Mirabilio," and de Lara's "Amy Robsart" and "Messaline," have rarely been heard in America. I have sung in scores of opera which have been popular in Europe at one time or another; "Lalla Roukh" by Félicien David, "Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté" by Am-

broise Thomas, "Le Roi d'Ys" by Lalo, "La Nuit de Cléopatre" by Victor Massé, and so many others that the list becomes tedious!

Of Bizet's productions, beside the all too famous "Carmen," I have sung Leila in the "Pécheurs de Perles," introducing it to New York at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1896. I have also appeared in his charming little opera "Djamileh," full of grace and sentiment, and in "La Jolie Fille de Perth," both of which I sang in Italy. Among the operas which are familiar to the American public, beside those of which I have already spoken in the course of this story, I have sung Lucia in Donizetti's "Luca di Lammermoor," Amina in the "Sonnambula" of Bellini, "Lakmé" by Delibes, Pamina in Mozart's "Magic Flute," and so forth! I cannot even remember them all, yet how many transformations and changes they represent, how many pages of music, how many lines of verse and prose memorised!

All this means study and hard work, for there is no short cut to acquiring a part. One cannot learn a rôle by sleeping on the score! Intense concentrated effort is needed for the mere process of committing to memory words and music. Yet this

is perhaps the easiest part of the work. In addition, one must study the character, the play, the period, in order to form an idea of the opera as a whole. Then each act, each scene, and finally each phrase and expression must be intelligently developed so that in the end a living and consistent character may be presented to the public.

I have always been extremely observant and this characteristic has been most useful to me in my artistic career. I am always watching for some new idea. Even the slightest suggestion, the most insignificant detail, may be rich in possibility, if one is on the alert for information and ideas. As a young girl I used to watch the great singers and actors of the day with avid interest and curiosity, trying to understand their methods of obtaining a given effect, eager to pick up every crumb of information that might fall from the rich board of their achievement. I try, now, to make my pupils realise how much more constructive and helpful it is to observe the good qualities in a performance rather than the bad. It is easy to criticise, but in the act of dwelling on the faults of another person one may be engraving these very defects on one's own mind, and there is a danger that one will imi-

tate them unconsciously. It is much more useful to note the good points in an artist's work. Sometimes in the very midst of a poor or second-rate performance, a brilliant bit of phrasing, a graceful gesture, an effective piece of stage business will give the receptive listener a new idea.

I have never reached a period in my career where I could afford to close my mind to new ideas and impressions. I find myself to-day as eager to learn, as ready for fresh suggestions, and as interested in the development of new possibilities as in my student days. There is a touching picture by Burne-Jones of a blind beggar holding out his hands, ready to receive from the passer-by anything that he may give—gold or dross, the evil with the good. This seems to me a symbol of what I mean when I tell my pupils that an artist must be ready to receive, to learn, to take whatever comes his way, with a willing and eager acceptance, so that he may in turn give to the world a work of art that shall be a true reflection of life—a living, vital creation.

I have had a great deal of good luck in my career. I was fortunate in coming to the operatic stage at a time when there were few singers whose type and temperament fitted them for the interpretation of

such parts as Carmen and Santuzza. I was needed and I was at hand. This accounts perhaps for part of my success; hard work, patience and perseverance for another part. And for the rest, it is for others who have heard and seen me on the stage to judge.

My comrades will understand me when I say that it requires a great deal of character and determination to stick to an operatic career. One is often tempted to give up the struggle—to succumb before the endless difficulties and discouragements that meet one at every turn. One must have tenacity of purpose, courage and unflagging energy, to follow one's ideal and to refuse the easier and safer courses that are constantly opening up along the way. For me, however, no other career would have been possible; and I have found it, within its limits, stimulating and rewarding.

Life behind the scenes has its kindly and pleasant side, as well as its hardships. Its pleasures are very different from those that the popular imagination has created for us, but nevertheless they are not to be despised. How many good friends, loyal comrades and generous souls have I known among the inhabitants of the theatrical world! I

have often heard our brotherhood misjudged. As a matter of fact, we are as hard-working and idealistic a group as will be found in any other profession.

I have known the most devoted fathers, the most unselfish and self-sacrificing mothers among stage folk. The generosity of the profession is well known. Practically every one of my comrades supports a number of dependent relatives or unfortunate friends. It is considered a disgrace to allow any member of one's family or clan to go uncared for, no matter how distant the connection may be.

Is it not to us that every one turns, when there is a question of raising money for a charitable or philanthropic endeavour? Do we hesitate to give of our best for these good works, never counting how fragile, how delicate a thing is the human voice? It is not my desire to write a panegyric of the profession. But I think any one who has known the world of the theatre or opera stage will agree that, though we are not as gay and frivolous as the public would like to believe, we are at any rate as ready as others to do our small share toward a better world.

We have the reputation of being superstitious. It would be more true to say that we are usually deeply religious. There are few atheists among us.

One last word of all, for the young girls who are bent upon following an operatic career. Remember this: In spite of the fascination of a dazzling public life, there is a destiny more glorious still—to be able to devote yourself exclusively to that small audience of two or three who will call you by the dear name of "mother."

CHAPTER XXX

A HAPPY RETURN

IT is not for me to speak of my successes of to-day, but as I turn my face homeward and make ready to leave for a while this great country of America, I am tempted to dwell for a moment on the months that have just passed, months which have held for me one of the happiest experiences of my life and have crowned with success a long and fortunate career.

"Life is courage," said Balzac, and so have I found all through my life, but in recent years more strikingly than ever. Success is difficult to obtain and glory is fugitive, especially for those whose art takes the form of dramatic or musical interpretation. Our creations dissolve into the air without leaving a trace. Though our triumphs may be immediate and dazzling beyond those of any other artists, yet they are proportionately unsubstantial and evanescent. Who remembers now the voices of the past? There remains only a memory, a tradition, a mere name.

One day not long ago a friend invited me to her house.

"I have gathered together the boys and girls of the younger generation," she said. "I want them to have the privilege of knowing you as we have known you in our day."

When I found myself face to face with that roomful of young beings, not one of them over twenty, when I saw those fresh faces, those new eyes, when I felt those glances full of curiosity and question, I realised suddenly the passage of time! These young people did not know me at all, except by name. To them I was a stranger! I evoked no memories, aroused no happy associations. My voice could not bring them an emotion, known and felt before. I must satisfy their avid curiosity as to whether their parents had been right in loving and applauding me. Up to that time I had only thought of the years as bringing me, not a possible diminution of power, but rather a constant increase of knowledge and experience, a firmer grasp of my art, and a more intelligent understanding of what I was trying to achieve. I knew in my own heart that I could really sing better than

ever, but I had to prove it to these young people who did not know me.

I was determined to force their admiration, and I was able, through my will and my imagination, to make myself their equal, to become young again in voice and feeling. Never has applause sounded so sweet in my ears!—never appreciation so warming to my heart which had just disclosed itself to these new friends! It was like the old days when, as a girl of twenty, I had won a public to which I was as yet unknown. The same thrill of victory, the same joy was mine again!

I have had a similar experience this winter, but on a much larger scale. I came to New York after an absence of seven years, like a beginner making her début. I had disappeared. I was dead, perhaps, for all the public knew. I had to prove to the hurrying and indifferent crowd that I was still *Calvé!*

And once more I have been rewarded! It is not too much to say that I have been received with an enthusiasm and a warmth of approval, both by the public and the critics, that has left me nothing to regret. I have been applauded and fêted as in the most glorious days of my operatic career.

I have been asked to sing over and over again in this great city of New York, and as a substantial proof of my victory, I have been offered engagements not only for this winter, but for many years to come. I have succeeded once more in finding my place in the hearts of the American people.

What a splendid, what a great country is this! How happy I am to have consecrated to it the finest years of my career. Here I find the same faithful friends as of old, affectionate and cordial as ever, and here new friends, new faces, new enthusiasms greet me on every hand.

Once more I have travelled through the great West, the rich and fertile middle plains of this marvellous country. I feel myself almost breathless with the urge of energy and vitality that these new cities radiate. They seem to be vying with each other in a titanic race toward some immeasurable goal. What strength, what movement, what gigantic forces are at work in these growing populations! Each town and city is determined to outdo its neighbour in numbers, wealth, luxury—and in automobiles!

The automobiles! *Mon Dieu,* they seem bigger and more numerous than the houses themselves!

I have seen, standing outside the most modest frame cottage, cars that were larger and undoubtedly more expensive than the house itself! Not that there is any lack of handsome residences in the Middle West. Indeed, I have never beheld such magnificent houses as certain districts in some of these western cities can boast. When I was motoring through these towns and cities it seemed to me that I passed miles of veritable palaces, each surrounded by its garden or park. In Texas the wealthier citizens have apparently determined to build no two houses alike. Italian villas, English baronial halls, Spanish patios and Moorish courts—every type of style and architecture has been adapted to the uses of these home builders. Yet all this variety and diversity is harmonised and made both comfortable and agreeable to the eye by the lovely setting of these dwellings, the lawns and gardens, and the tree-lined avenues that surround them.

I noticed also that no matter what period or nationality might be suggested in the building of a house, one purely American feature is always included—a sleeping porch! Every house has one or two of these delightful out-door rooms. Indeed the cult of the "out-of-doors" is very evident every-

where in America. The innumerable country clubs, the beautiful, immaculately-kept golf links, the constant use of automobiles for pleasure rides and "picnics," all attest the fondness of the average citizen for air and space.

In most of the cities that I have visited in the United States, especially west of the Atlantic border, I am impressed by the efforts that are everywhere visible toward beautifying and "improving" the city as a whole. It is not only that each community wishes to be the largest, richest and "most important" spot in the state or country, but it must also be well planned, well laid out and well adorned. In consequence beautiful boulevards are laid out all through the residential districts; magnificent stretches of flawless road, tree-shaded and as broad as several ordinary avenues, lead through the parks and along the waterfronts. Playgrounds are built for the children, and everything is done to bring out the advantages of the natural setting of each city. The public buildings are particularly imposing and make up in massiveness and white marble what they may lack in historical significance. Garden cities are these cities of the West, comfortable, clean,

beautiful and admirably adapted to the uses of a people that loves fresh air, sunlight and work!

The men and women of the West take from their country something of its magnificence and beauty. They are a vigorous people, well built and well endowed. I heard many lovely natural voices during my tour, and this, together with the fact that many young girls, in the East as well as the West, have come to me asking for advice and assistance in their musical studies, has suggested to me the possibility of opening a School of Singing in America. Cabrières cannot take in all these aspirants!

It has been a great joy to me to feel everywhere that I went during my recent tour, a warmer and closer sympathy than ever between myself and my audiences. I am better understood, my art and my endeavour is more intelligently appreciated now than ever before. Is it because, since the Great War, so many of the young people of America have been to France and have learned something of our language, our mentality, our ideals? Perhaps this is the explanation. I do not know. All I can say is that never before have I felt so much at home in this great country. Even in the years of my operatic successes, even amid the enthusiasm and ap-

plause of those days, I never felt as happy, or as completely in sympathy with my public as during my last stay in America. Surely between myself and these splendid young people, veritable Crusaders, true Knights of Columbia, who came to help us drive out the enemy from our dear land of France, surely between us there is a warmer current of understanding, an affection and an appreciation that did not exist before.

It has been a source of happiness to me to realise through my personal experience this growth of sympathy between France, my own beloved *patrie*, and America, almost as dear, my second, my adopted, country. It is a joy to me to know that I shall be returning many times to this great land, not merely as a visitor to the scenes of past successes, but as one who still "carries the torch" and who, by example and perhaps also by precept, can bear witness to the truths of a great art.

INDEX

Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Turkey, 147–151.
Aben Hamet, 40, 41.
"Aben Hamet," opera of, 40, 104, 260.
Alboni, 47, 184.
"Amico Fritz," 55, 63, 260.
Amina, Calvé sings rôle of, 261.
Amy Robsart, Calvé creates rôle of, 87.
"Amy Robsart," opera of, 87, 260.
Aveyron, Department of, 1, 66, 67, 86, 119, 153-155, 215.

Balzac, 267.
"Barber of Seville, The," 118, 163.
Bataille, 230.
Battistini, 59, 139.
Beatrice, Princess, 96.
Beethoven, 237, 238.
Bellini, 261.
Berlioz, 258, 259.
Bernhardt, Sarah, 171–174, 247.
Bizet, 14, 55, 83, 101, 127, 261.
Boïto, 101, 258, 259.
Bonnier, 227, 228.
Brisson, Adolph, 157.
Brussels, 31–34.
Busoni, 237, 238.

Cabrières, xii, 153-159, 197, 215, 225–228, 231, 232, 236, 239, 241–247.
Calvé, Emma, birthplace and forebears of, 1, 2; early childhood in Spain, 3–14; returns to France, 14; family home, 15–19; first attempts at artistic expression, 19, 20; first public appearance, 20, 21; taken to Paris to study singing, 23–30; début on concert stage, 27, 28; operatic début, 31–34; studies with Marchesi, 37; début in Paris, 40, 41; disastrous appearance in Milan, 42, 43; suffering and sickness, 44–47; studies with Madame Laborde, 47–55; Italian tour, 55–60; influence of Duse, 60, 61; studies special notes with Mustapha, 63–65; a mock

triumph, 69–73; tragic hours, 75–78; creates Santuzza and Carmen in Paris, 79–83; creates Sapho and "La Navarraise," 84–86; sings in London and at Windsor Palace, 87–98; first engagement in New York, 99–101; the Metropolitan Opera Company, 101–111; touring in America, 113–124; a brief engagement in Spain, 125–129; trips to Mexico and Cuba, 131–138; Russian audiences 139–145; singing for the Sultan, 147–151; buys Cabrières, 153, 154; some fellow artists and friends, 161–184; influence of the Swami Vivi Kananda, 185–194; attends fête given to Mistral, 195–200; travels around the world, 201–212; war experiences, 213–223; on the teaching of singing, 225–240; daily life at Cabrières, 241–248; an opera-singer's life, 249–254; art and the interpretation of rôles, 255–266; a happy return to the United States, 267–274.

Calvé, father of, 3, 28, 102, 110, 153, 154, 198, 241.

Calvé, mother of, 3, 4–14, 23, 24, 27–29, 70–73.

Carmen, Calvé's interpretation of, influenced by early experience, 13, 14; Calvé creates rôle of, 80–83; Calvé sings in New York, 99–102, 116, 124, 128, 129, 136, 145, 151, 168, 178–181, 234, 238, 245, 251, 256, 257, 264.

"Carmen," opera of, 63, 80, 99–102, 116, 127, 136, 141, 147, 149, 178, 233, 241, 261.

Caruso, 164–169, 247.

Carvalho, 41, 79, 234.

Carvalho, Madame, 41, 196, 233, 252–254.

Castelmary, 106, 107.

"Cavalleria Rusticana," 79–81, 90, 95, 99, 100, 107, 108, 118, 127.

Chaliapin, 258.

Cherubin, Calvé sings rôle of, 32, 33, 41, 260.

Cherubini, 47.

"Chevalier, Jean, Le," Calvé creates leading rôle in, 41, 260.

Cleveland, Mrs. Grover, 122.

Constant, Benjamin, 104, 157.

Coquelin, 100.

Costanzi Theater, 63.

Countess, the, Calvé sings rôle of, 32, 260.

Covent Garden, 84, 87, 110.

"Damnation de Faust," 258.
Daudet, Alphonse, 84.
David, Félicien, 20, 260.
de Bériot, 58.
de Gleiken, Countess Theodora, 95.
de Gray, Lady, 96.
de Joncière, 41.
de Lara, 87, 101, 235, 260.
Delibes, 261.
de Musset, 233.
de Reszke, Edouard, 104.
de Reszke, Jean, 100, 101, 104, 114.
Desdemona, 57.
de Stäel, Madame, 255.
de Vere, Clementine, 105.
Devoyood, 177.
"Djamileh," Calvé sings in, 261.
"Don Giovanni," 103.
Donizetti, 261.
Don José, 63, 100, 179–181.
Dubois, Theodore, 40.
Duse, Eleanora, 60, 61, 109, 110.

Eames, Emma, 105.
Elsa, 83.
Escamillo, 233.
Eugénie, Empress, 89, 90.

Fabre, Henri, 67.
Falstaff, 103
"Faust," 31, 32, 101, 177, 258.
Fenice, Théâtre de, 69, 70.
"Flora Mirabilio," Calvé creates leading rôle in, 42, 43, 260.
Folk-songs of France, 28, 86, 88, 157, 217.
Frezzolini, 49, 58.

Gailhard, 157.
Galli-Marié, 81–83.
Garcia, Manuel, 56, 57, 230.
Gounod, 34, 37, 41, 196, 258, 259.
Grand Duchess Vladimir, the, 139, 140, 142, 143.
Grau, Maurice, 101, 102, 110, 113–115, 122, 129.
Grizi, 49.
Gypsies, Spanish, 11–14, 81, 82, 257.

Hahn, Reynaldo, 97.
Hamlet, 55, 247.
"Hamlet," opera of, 63, 101, 139, 258.
"Hérodiade," 32, 260.
Hérodias, Calvé sings rôle of, 32, 260.
Hugel, M., 43.
Hugo, Victor, 247.

Iago, 103, 104.
Irving, Henry, 247.

Italiens, Théâtre des, 40, 41, 47, 104, 161.

"Jolie Fille de Perth," Calvé sings in, 261.
Juliet, 83, 245.

Krauss, 37-40.

La Bastide, Calvé's family home at, 2, 15–19, 24–26, 35, 36.
Lablache, 49–51.
Laborde, Rosina, 44, 45, 47, 48, 51–53, 55.
"Lakmé," Calvé sings in, 261.
Lalo, 261.
Lamartine, 20.
Lehmann, Lilli, 105, 252.
Leila, Calvé sings rôle of, 261.
Leygues, 157.
Lhérie, 63.
Lizt, 38–40.
Loyson, Father Hyacinthe, 188, 189.
Lucia, Calvé sings rôle of, 261.
Lucia, 55, 63.

"Magic Flute, The," 261.
Malibran, 44, 45, 49, 56, 57, 233.
Manhattan Opera House, 111.
Marchesi, 37–40.
Marconi, 128.
Marguerite, Calvé sings rôle of, 31, 32, 83, 101, 177, 238, 245, 258–260.
Mario, 49.
Mascagni, 55, 63, 260.
Massé, Victor, 261.
Massenet, 32, 84, 85, 87, 101, 260.
Maurel, Victor, 40, 41, 55, 103, 104.
Mazzantini, 125.
"Mefistofele," 101, 258.
Melba, 101, 105, 109, 114.
Mérimée, Prosper, 100.
Messaline, Calvé creates rôle of, 87, 235.
"Messaline," opera of, 87, 101, 260.
Metropolitan Opera House, 99, 101, 102, 107–111, 113, 129, 213, 261.
Metternich, Princess de, 184.
"Mireille," 196.
Mistral, Frédéric, 88, 195–200.
Monnaie de Bruxelle, Théâtre de la, 31.
Mounet–Sully, 157.
Mozart, 41, 103, 238, 260, 261.
Mustapha, 63–65.

"Navarraise, La," Calvé creates leading rôle in, 84, 87, 101, 245, 260.

New York, 82, 99, 107, 110, 129, 137, 211, 213, 244, 246, 269.
Nicolini, 163.
"Noces de Figaro," 32, 33, 41, 260.
Nordica, 105.
Nourit, 254.
"Nuit de Cléopatre," Calvé sings in, 261.

Opéra Comique, 29, 41–43, 79, 83, 106, 129.
Ophelia, Calvé sings rôle of, 48, 55, 59, 66, 67, 69, 83, 101, 139, 145, 238, 245, 257, 258.
Othello, 57.

Pagliacci, 247.
Palestrina, 64.
Pamina, Calvé sings rôle of, 261.
Paris, 23–28, 31, 37, 79, 97, 106, 129, 211, 225.
Pasta, 49.
Patti, Adelina, 47; anecdote concerning mother of, 49, 50, 69, 70, 129, 161–164, 183.
"Pêcheurs de Perles," 55, 261.
Peuch, Denys, 65–67.
Piermarini, 47.
Plançon, 101, 106, 114.
Prince Imperial, the, 89, 90.
Priola, Marguerite, 254.
Puget, Jules, 27, 37.

Rachel, 214, 238.
Renaud, 258.
Richepin, Jean, 201.
Rodez, Bishop of, 21.
Romeo, 104.
Rossini, 163, 184.
"Roi d'Ys, Le," Calvé sings in, 261.

Saint-Saëns, 38.
Salignac, 106, 107, 117–119, 236.
Salomé, Calvé sings rôle of, 32, 260.
Samara, 42.
San Carlo of Naples, the, 55, 56.
Santuzza, Calvé creates rôle of, in Paris, 79, 80, 83, 90, 95, 99, 107, 108, 245, 264.
Sanz, Elena, 174–176.
Sappho, Calvé creates rôle of, 84, 245.
"Sappho," opera of, 84–86, 260.
Scala of Milan, the, 42.
Schumann-Heink, 105.
Segond, 230.
Sembrich, Marcella, 104, 118.
Shubert, 39.
Siegfried, 104.
"Songe d'une Nuit d'Été," 260.

INDEX

"Sonnambula," 261.
Sontag, 45, 49.
Spain, Queen of, 90, 91, 94.
Strakosch, Maurice, 162.
Susanna, Calvé sings rôle of, 260.
Susel, Calvé creates rôle of, 63.
Swami Vivi Kananda, 185–194, 203, 247.

Tamagno, 258.
Tamburini, 49.
Ternina, 105.
Thomas, Ambroise, 261.
"Tribut de Zamora," 37, 38.
Turridu, 107.

Verdi, 103.
Verlaine, Paul, 97, 98.
Victoria, Queen, 87–96.

Wilde, Oscar, 96–98.

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